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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MAGNANIMITY IN ARISTOTLE'S *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

by

David Martin

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDMONTON ALBERTA

SPRING, 1993

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Magnanimity in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* here submitted by David Martin in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date Dec 10, 1992

Abstract

Nicomachean Ethics is a book which provides a unified teaching about the good life and its pursuit in the context of political society. One point at which one may gain access to Aristotle's teaching is in his treatment of magnanimity.

Magnanimity occupies a privileged place among the ethical virtues because it requires perfection of all ethical virtues. The perfection of the ethical virtues as it is seen in the magnanimous person illuminates the problems in the relationship between politics and virtue. However, the specific form of the ethical virtues will vary from city to city.

The variance in teaching with respect to ethical virtue becomes important when we take into account Aristotle's treatment of intellectual virtue. With the intellectual virtues it becomes clear that there must be a higher form of magnanimity which can be understood in light of Aristotle's references to the contemplative life.

With these two forms of magnanimity it is possible to begin to grasp Aristotle's teaching about the best life and its relationship to political society.

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Introduction

The Good for humankind is a concern which, according to Aristotle, is central to politics and the education provided within the political community. It is through an understanding of the Good which is shared by the community that the community itself is unified. Its citizens grow sharing the common experience of an order which influences every part of their lives. Their relations with each other, their families, and many of the actions they are proud or ashamed of are influenced by the understanding of the Good which underlies their community. It is appropriate, then, that the community takes great care in teaching its citizens and cultivating common ground, not only in their understanding of the Good, but in their understanding of the conduct most conducive to achieving that good. For Aristotle, the community is active in teaching its citizens what is Good and encouraging them to act in accordance with this Good. Hence, an understanding of ethics is central to the political education provided for the citizens, because ethics reflects the city's understanding of the Good.

It is for this reason that the virtue of magnanimity is of interest. In magnanimity the ethical virtues have been developed to their fullest capacity and are manifest together in a manner wherein each complements the other. Such outstanding virtue is worthy of study in itself, but it also provides a means of acquiring a more complete understanding of the relationship between ethics and politics as it is understood by Aristotle. Magnanimity provides the opportunity to understand ethical virtue as it manifests itself both in the soul and within the political community. This is beneficial because it allows one to become familiar with the entirety of political life as Aristotle understood it. And the questions which emerge in connection with such an investigation are diverse and take one to the very heart of Aristotle's political thought. One is confronted with questions about the place of friendship in political society and the nature of the education toward virtue. Most importantly, the virtue of magnanimity itself will bring to the fore considerations about the nature of philosophy and the philosophic life, and its place in the political community.

The discussion of magnanimity will also bring to light an important feature of *N.E.*. which is implicit throughout this thesis. *Nicomachean Ethics* is characterized by an ascent which begins with the question concerning the Good in Book One and peaks in Book Ten with the discussion of the contemplative life. This is a singular development which serves to unify the work and of which magnanimity forms an integral part. The discussion of magnanimity will provide a sketch of this ascent to contemplation.

An important aspect of the ascending character of the argument in *N.E.* is found in the fact that it allows the reader to place Aristotle's discussions of different virtues into the context of the whole work, and thereby understand their relative importance. Thus, the context of his discussion of magnanimity and the order of the virtues as a whole will be of considerable importance in understanding magnanimity in its fullness. This will be seen most clearly when the intellectual virtues, which are assumed in his discussion of the ethical virtues, are taken into account. Furthermore, one is able to place the discussion of different activities of the virtuous life, such as friendship or contemplation, into context. Thus, the book provides a coherent account of the good life for a human being.

It is because *N.E.* provides such an account that the discussion of magnanimity is of such interest. An example of such complete virtue brings the questions and problems of the relationship between politics and virtue to the fore. While it is necessarily the case that this investigation will be brief and cursory in nature, and it will not be possible to show in detail the ascent which characterizes this work, Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity will act as a point of access to *N.E.*, and as a basis for further reflection on the relationship between ethics and politics.

Chapter One

The Place of Magnanimity

The study of politics naturally encompasses the study of ethics because it is concerned with the Good for human kind. Those actions which are most conducive to the growth of a mature person must be taught publicly and upheld within the community by law. This assumes, however, that the law and the political community are an adequate means of bringing about virtue in each citizen. That the law is not sufficient to bring about virtue in the soul is seen in those who take advantage of individual citizens or the entire political community by manipulation or infraction of the law. The law's effectiveness for bringing about virtue appears to be limited in some sense. Strangely enough, a limitation emerges in the case of one who has mastered ethical virtue, because ethical virtue can lead a person to be opposed to or even break laws which the city upholds. Clearly in these two cases, the law's short-comings are not the result of a failure to encourage virtue. While it may encourage virtue, the law is limited in some sense, either by the city, by human nature or by the nature of ethical virtue itself. It is important to understand these limitations because they shed considerable light on the relationship of ethical virtue with the city. This requires, however, that one examine in some detail the growth of ethical virtue in its highest form. In Aristotle's initial presentation, ethical virtue is most complete in magnanimity. To begin, then, it is necessary to provide a general introduction to the problems which arise in connection with magnanimity and show why this virtue is worthy of the most careful study.

Magnanimity or *megalopsychia* (i.e., greatness of soul) is the name given to that quality of moral excellence which is concerned with the desire for great honors (1107b22-27)[1]. It is similar to an unnamed virtue that is concerned with the desire for moderate or small honors (1125b1-26). The presence of two virtues concerned with the desire for honor demonstrates the importance of such a desire in human nature. It is an exclamation mark for the necessity of desiring honor in a manner fitting to one's capacities. The concern for great honors must be grounded upon something which provides it with legitimacy, and the only quality which can meet such a requirement is true greatness. Hence, magnanimity is found in one who "both is and thinks himself worthy of great things" (1123b16). It is a virtue based on a correct understanding of the merits of one's own soul which one correctly perceives to be great. It follows from this that the actions with which it is concerned will be actions aimed at displaying this worth to others. They will be acts recognizable to others as good for their exemplary command of virtue. It is for this reason Aristotle states that "greatness in every virtue would seem to be a mark of the [magnanimous] man" (1123b30,31). Magnanimity is in a unique position among the other virtues. Where the other virtues can be cultivated independently or require mastery in only one other virtue, as is the case with magnificence which assumes generosity, magnanimity requires all the other ethical virtues. It is with this in mind that Aristotle states that "magnanimity is a sort of ornament of the virtues; for it makes them greater and cannot exist without them" (1124a2,3). Magnanimity is more than the sum of the other virtues because it somehow makes the other virtues greater. It is a perfection of the soul which manifests greatness in each ethical virtue. A person's soul must be truly great insofar as magnanimity requires that he possess a greater capacity for ethical virtue than all others.

From this it is clear that magnanimity represents a culmination or peak in Aristotle's discussion of ethical virtue. This is implied by Aristotle himself in the structure of the discussion of the virtues. He goes to great lengths to show that there is a similarity in the way that the nameless virtue concerned with moderate and small honors relates to magnanimity, and the way generosity relates to magnificence. This is clear from the first definition of magnanimity at 1107b23-30:

> With regard to honor and dishonor, the mean is [magnanimity], the excess is said to be a sort of vanity, and the deficiency is low-mindedness. And just as generosity was said to be related to [magnificence] by being concerned with smaller amounts, so too there is a virtue which is concerned with smaller

> honors and is similarly related to [magnanimity] which is concerned with great honors....

Aristotle intends to juxtapose the two virtues concerned with honor and the two concerned with property. The emphasis in his discussion, however, falls with most force on the similarity of magnanimity and magnificence (*megaloprepia* ie.,great-fittingness). To be sure, the first sentence of his treatment of magnanimity makes explicit reference to this similarity by emphasizing the resemblance in the names of the two virtues:

> [Magnanimity], as its name also seems to indicate, is concerned with great things
>
> (1123a35)

Like *megalopsychia*, *megaloprepia* is concerned with greatness; but the two virtues do not concern themselves with the same kind of greatness. While the magnanimous person is concerned with actions which bring honor for certain qualities of soul, the magnificent person is concerned about honor deriving from the use of material goods (1122a19-23). This is a difference of no small consequence. Magnanimity relies ultimately on action as an end in itself, but magnificence emphasizes appearances. The contributions of magnificence to the city are great and have an impressive appearance which fills those who observe them with admiration or wonder. Like magnanimity, magnificence inclines one to act for the sake of what is noble and to the benefit of the city. The agent does so, however, in a fashion that draws attention to his wealth (1120a25,26; 1122b7,8). Therefore, the magnificent person will, for the sake of honor, put wealth to work for noble causes, and he will draw attention to and elicit admiration for the conspicuous use of his wealth (1122b15-24).

Greatness in some quality or in the number or value of one's possessions will go hand in hand with a concern for honor. Yet the reason for Aristotle's juxtaposition of magnificence and magnanimity runs far deeper than their mutual concern for honor. For all its grandeur, magnificence relies for its praise on what is impressive to the senses (1122b20-26). It emphasizes those things which are considered great in the city, for example wealth, position and reputation (1122b30-35). In short, the goods which are emphasized by magnificence are the goods of the body and the pleasures arising from reputation and status within the city. However, Aristotle clearly places the goods of the body beneath the goods of the soul, and shows that the pleasures derived from honor are not the greatest (1095b23-30,1098b10-23). This has important implications for the relationship of magnanimity to city. An indication of this can be seen in Aristotle's comment that the magnanimous person will have little concern for reputation within the city in some cases (1124b26-28). The juxtaposition of magnificence and magnanimity highlights a difference between what the city honors and what is honored by the truly virtuous people in the city. It brings to the fore the possibility that a difference exists between what is most honorable by nature and what is honored by most people in the city.

As Aristotle points out, honor is an external good which depends upon one's fellow citizens in the polis; but even if one relies on prudent friends, this is problematic from the outset for two reasons (1095b27-30). First, honor relies on the opinion of others and different people will honor different things according to the desires which most dominate their souls (1176a4-20). There appears to be no universal standard among people. The second problem is that the city is responsible for the distribution of honors among the deserving citizens, and in this it is guided by standards which may be conventional (1130b31;1094b14,15; 1134b19-24). Conventions are not grounded in nature, but in the agreement of the people to whom the conventions apply. The laws and customs of a city are always in accord with what it desires, insofar as a city forms its laws and customs on the basis of what is most advantageous for the entire population. However, different cities will find different customs advantageous, and thus there appears to be no universal standard among cities. This accentuates the possibility that those who receive honor from the city and its citizens and those truly worthy of honor will not always coincide. Fortune does not necessarily grace the brows of the most deserving. With the juxtaposition of magnificence and magnanimity, Aristotle marks a contrast between those people of wealth, noble birth and political power who have received their position in part because of fortuitous circumstances, and those who should be honored because they are good. This is an important distinction because the former are honored by some as magnanimous even though they lack complete virtue and their claim is unjust (1124a27-29). It is the magnanimous person who possesses all the ethical virtues who should be honored, and not necessarily the magnificent person.

What emerges at the height of Aristotle's discussion of ethical virtue is a problem with the traditionally accepted view of virtue. It appears that the honor of the polis can be misplaced. The city does not recognize or may not wish to recognize that which is most honorable by [2]nature. Two questions are central in clarifying this problem. First, why is the peak of Aristotle's discussion of ethical virtue concerned with a virtue that looks toward a good based upon the opinion of others? This is complicated by the fact that what is honored will inevitably change from political community to political community because of differing laws and customs. Second, why does the city not acknowledge the superior virtue of magnanimity? It is clear that politics is concerned with virtue because virtue is concerned with the Good (1094a29-b11,1095b4-6,1098a7-21). Yet the laws and customs of the political community do not seem to take into account true magnanimity, which is more honorable because it displays every ethical virtue to its fullest capacity. This implies a difference between virtue on an individual level and virtue as it is perceived by a community. There is an apparent disjunction between the concern of the magnanimous person, in whom is manifest every ethical virtue, and the city. A dissonance occurs between that upon which virtue is based and the practical necessities imposed on a political community.

This dissonance is sharpened and clarified by the discussion of the social virtues which follows the discussion of magnanimity. Social virtues are those which manifest themselves in communication and interaction between people who live within the same political community, and in similar interaction with people from outside the community (1126b11,12). By discussing the social virtues after the discussion of magnanimity, Aristotle brings to the fore the question of how a human being's pursuit of the Good is to be harmonized with the Good as it is seen by a political community. That the two are not naturally harmonious follows from the fact that human nature is such that people have an attachment to what is their own, for example, family and friends. This constitutes a problem for the political association because it is composed of a number of individuals and families, each concerned with their own good. The city must strike a balance between its own good and the good of its citizens.

It is this consideration which allows one to understand the limitations of a city's laws and customs. What is practically necessary for a particular city will not necessarily coincide with the desires of each of its citizens. The laws and customs of a city must either force or make its citizens willing to compromise their desires. Let us look at this problem in greater detail.

The problem centers around the laws and customs which order the parts that make up the city. In other words, it is a problem of justice (1130b23-27,b30-1131a9). This does not raise the question of how an individual relates to the community as it is understood in the modern context with its division between state and society. For Aristotle, the view of the Good which lies behind the laws and customs of a community is bound to define the political character of that community because the Good to which it aspires is architectonic. It has the positive effect of organizing other ends which are by nature parts of it but at the same time are subservient to it (1094a6-16). Through this ordering, the laws and customs bring about concord, or the sameness of opinion concerning matters of mutual importance (1167a22-30). The most important aspect of concord is not that it exists amongst the citizens, although this is true, but that it exists between the ruler(s) and the ruled, "for in relations in which there is nothing common to the ruler and to the ruled, there is no friendship, as there is nothing just" (1161a33,34). Concord is a kind of political friendship between members of an association, and it is grounded upon the agreement between rulers and the ruled about what is mutually beneficial (1167b3). When such agreement exists among the citizens, they agree also that obedience to the law is in their own interest. However, through their lawful actions they not only benefit themselves but other citizens as well. Concord brings justice and friendship together in that the members of the political community are agreed both about the goodness of the aims of their association and its laws. Insofar as they act lawfully and in any other way help the city achieve its ends, they act for their own good and the good of other citizens. They are favorably disposed towards each other as citizens, or in other words, they are friends in a political sense.

It is clear that this friendship does not come about of its own accord, but in the political task of forming its laws and upholding its customs, a community imparts its view of the Good to its citizens, first by ordering the different elements which make up the community, and then by educating the citizens to recognize the benefits which inhere in that order (1094b1-11)[3]. The different parts of a political community can be understood as different "associations" each of which aim at an end expedient for its members (1160a9,10, 29,30). People come together into these associations because they find themselves in circumstances which bring their natural limitations to the fore. They are not naturally self-sufficient, and when circumstances impose mutual concerns upon them they pool their capacities to overcome the difficulties. Thus, beyond the fact that the acquisition of food, clothing, and shelter is most easily accomplished in communities, they find that the acquisition of goods from outside their community can bring additional benefits. Therefore, people form associations with the aim of acquiring these goods. These associations are characterized by concord, because their ends provide their members with common ground, and holding things in common is necessary for friendship (1159b32). For example, sailors work to assure the proper operation of their vessel and the successful completion of their voyage. In themselves these ends create a common ground upon which the sailors build relationships of mutual expectation and co-operation; however, there is added seriousness to these ends because in the event that the ship is lost, every person on board may lose his life. The successful completion of the voyage depends upon each member of the crew fulfilling the responsibilities of his position. This constitutes a form of friendship in that the sailors regard favorably those who perform their duties and fulfill their obligations (1159b28).

However, this also creates the possibility of injustice, because one person may take more than his share of the common goods, for example food; or he may choose not to fulfill his duties and force others to do an unfair amount of work. Furthermore, through the neglect of his duties or by creating ill-will between his fellow sailors, such a person may place the entire ship in danger. This brings to light an understanding of fairness and justice which arises as a result of the ends and the immediate circumstances of the association. The tasks which each sailor performs and his behavior towards the others on board are judged in accordance with how they contribute to the achievement of the ends for which the voyage was undertaken. On a small scale, this provides an example of natural justice, because "we call `just' those things which produce or preserve happiness or its parts in the political community" (1129b18,19). The situation of the city is similar to that of the ship. The city is composed of many associations, such as commercial or religious associations (1160a14-27). Yet the members of those associations share common ground through the sameness of opinion about the beneficial ends to which the city looks. They understand that the laws reflect an appropriate standard of justice given the practical purposes and the circumstances of the city.

However, that the city is composed of a number of associations makes its situation far more complicated than the above description implies. The greater the importance of the common ends for the members of an association, the greater the friendship (concord), and the greater the injustice which may be committed (1159b25). This is why

Aristotle notes that actions "become more unjust by being directed toward the more friendly" (1160a1-9). The strength of the political friendship and the mutual expectations of the association's members depends in part upon the kind of association. Thus, associations such as the family, strengthened by bonds of paternal or fraternal love, display a greater degree of concord than those which arise through circumstances alone (1161b12-16). The ends of these associations concern the nurturing and caring of one's own offspring, and the importance of these ends and the common ground involved makes injustice towards one's own family far greater than injustice towards strangers (1161b16-35, 1160a6). However, the majority of the city's population may be strangers to a particular citizen. This is the reason why people tend naturally to look to the good of that which is their own before they look to the good of the city. Thus, the architectonic good towards which the city aims must encompass the good of the associations of which the city is formed. Its laws must reflect the natural justice which accords with its ends and it must educate its citizens to recognize this justice.

It is implied, however, that in educating its citizens the city regulates the different arts and sciences, each of which aims a different end. Within the arts and sciences there are many different notions of the good:

> It appears to be different in different *actions* or arts; for in the medical art

> it is different from that in strategy and similarly from that in any of the rest of the arts.
> (1097a16-19)

Each of the goods to which the arts look are part of the larger good towards which the city as a whole aims. Therefore, they are less complete than the highest good and the highest good subsumes or encompasses the arts and sciences (109715-35). Thus the city orders the various arts and sciences, regulating the place of each within civil society according to its contribution to the highest good at which the city aims (1094b1-11). The order of the city's parts and the education of its citizens go hand in hand. The city orders itself in accordance with what it believes to be the highest good, and in doing so it educates its citizens to recognize the natural justice in the order. The city educates its citizens to recognize the importance of the common good and to place the most importance on those actions which benefit the city and further its aims. In other words, the city emphasizes civic virtue.

This education to virtue is very important in the cultivation of concord, because while citizens may agree about the practical ends of the city, they do not agree about what is conducive to the particular happiness of each and every individual. As Aristotle states:

> It is not unreasonable that what men regard the good or happiness to be seems to come from their ways of living.
> (1095b16)

People's view of happiness will vary according to the lives they choose to live, and this introduces a tension which affects the entire the population of the city. The education to virtue provides a standard by which the appropriateness of a citizen's behavior is judged. Yet not all citizens will live the same way because they wish to acquire different goods for themselves. This is especially clear in the case of those who hold pleasure to be the most important good. Despite the city's education, these people do not engage in virtuous actions because of a disposition of character; instead, they perform the actions the law requires through fear of punishment. Thus, in addition to educating the citizens to recognize virtue, the law must provide the community with the security it needs to blunt the rashness of that part of the population led by passion, and which responds to nothing but fear (1179b7-16). Therefore, a fundamental division exists between those who are ruled by their baser passions and those who act as they do because they feel good or bad about the right things (1104b12). The law, then, defines the character of the community by ordering its various parts and educating its citizens to act in a manner appropriate to that order.

Therefore, law acts as a means to an end. It smooths the factions arising from the tension which exists between the different parts and members of the association (1131a22-29). The difficulty of this effort is clear, and the practical considerations imposed upon the community are also clear. People look to their own good and the good of those associations of which they are a part, for example, one's family. Thus, they exhibit a natural propensity to enjoy the acquisition of more good things than they necessarily deserve in the context of the political community. This is a problem of particular importance where goods are limited. In addition to this, people often display an exaggerated sense of attachment to what is their own, a point of human nature which can make relations particularly acrimonious when money is involved (1134a35;1167b26-34). It is the goal of the legislators, then, to "try their utmost to drive out faction, which is inimical to the state", which is to say that the law must render these sources of division impotent by introducing a standard by which the contribution of the citizens and the associations to the city's well-being can be measured and compared (cf.1131a23-29;1155a22-27). These standards are conventional, or in other words, they are held in place by the agreement of those within the community. The end of these conventions and the agreement required to maintain them shows that they cannot be arbitrary. They must be grounded upon principles of natural justice which can be grasped by most people. For this reason, the conventions will reflect what is naturally just given the ends, composition and circumstances of the political community. The education provided by the city to its citizens has as a goal the cultivation of an understanding of the city's views regarding justice and the acceptance of the various conventions. The ends of the associations and the relative contributions of the arts, sciences, and individuals who compose the political community will be rendered comparable by the conventions in the same way a coin renders goods of differing values comparable (1133a25-b29).

It is clear, then, that convention rests on a process of reasoning which must include reasoning about nature. To this extent it is subservient to nature and it must therefore be the ambition of legislators and others concerned with the preservation of conventions to embody within them, to the greatest extent possible, that which is natural to human beings (1134a35,1134b13-15,1134b30-35,1135a5-7). However, not all behavior can be regulated through law, and for this reason, conventions are supported by custom. Customs provide the form for those things which are natural, but are outside the concerns of written law (1134b19-24). The practices, although not law, have a basis in nature and are formed with an eye to the composition and needs of the particular community.4 Hence if law is to be an effective means of bringing order and concord into a community, it must be a mixture of nature and convention founded upon the conclusions of practical reason, and supported by customs within the community. Yet precisely because it is such a mixture, the laws and the order of political communities will vary according to the conclusions reached about how to practically achieve the ends for which they strive. Like all associations, the political community is characterized by principles which are naturally just, but the expression of what is just by nature changes with the city's circumstances and its form of government (1134b19-24). The object of the city is to provide for its citizens the means whereby they may grow to maturity in a given set of circumstances; and to the extent that the laws help the political community to achieve this end, they are just (1129b13-25,1134b13-15). This is why Aristotle concludes that the just is what is lawful (1129a27-b2). By its very nature a community must have rules which its members recognize and which serve to merge individual desires and preferences and make common enterprise toward a given end possible (cf:*Republic* 351c,d). A law, therefore, is a product of reasoning which seeks to take into account human nature and, with the use of custom and with an eye to what it assumes to be good for people and therefore just, bring human nature to maturity. It assumes that human beings have the potential to become good or bad and that we are by nature concerned with becoming better or worse (1103a25, 1104b19-21,1106a23,24).

Yet it is necessary that the political community combine what is just by nature with convention and custom according to its particular needs. The principles of natural justice are too broad to give precise guidance to cities in concrete circumstances. The laws of each city in connection with its customs serve to make the general principles of natural justice applicable to their particular cases. Thus, the expression of justice in each case is unique. The laws of the city allow it to achieve the ends for which it was constituted, and in this manner they reflect a kind of justice "which is the whole of virtue". However, even this form of justice is too broad, because the city's laws are incapable of taking into account the character of all citizens (1135a7-9,1100a30-b8). The mean as it applies to particular citizens is neither one nor the same (1105b30-1106a7). Thus, the laws are limited because of their universal character, and "decrees" are needed to correct the instances where an exception may be justified because laws are insufficient to allow for clear judgment (1137b13-19). The laws of the city do not reflect the virtue of the individual citizens in the same way that individual citizens may manifest virtue. Virtue will not manifest itself in the same way or to the same degree in each citizen, and even though they reflect what is just by nature, the laws require qualification on a particular level. This is true not only because they are general, but because the laws are products of human reason, and human reason is limited in its capacity to see all particular cases when legislating general rules (1137b20-24).

Once again, this raises questions for the magnanimous person within a city. The education provided by the city is an education of habituation which is concerned with forming the character of a citizen. Hence, its ultimate concern is the coming to be of the citizen (1103a24,25;b2-6,20-25). A citizen finds his being in the city and his being is thus grounded in and formed in accordance with the view of the Good assumed by the laws. The magnanimous person, then, will be committed to the city and manifest those virtues which the city upholds (1123b31-35). This is the reason why honor is so important to him. However, he will not be concerned with honor in the same way the magnificent one is concerned with it, that is as one who wishes to impress as many people as possible. The magnanimous person understands ethical virtue to be an end in itself, and those who do not recognize it as such will render him honors for which he has little regard. His appeal is to the ethical character of his fellow citizens. More will be said about this in the next chapter. It is important here, however, to note that this will necessarily have different expressions in different cities. Magnanimity will be different in an aristocracy that honors courage above all and a democracy that honors wisdom in the same way. It would follow, then, that there are differing species of magnanimity which correspond to the different kinds of cities.

A magnanimous person may also show concern for becoming good without qualification, and he may desire honor on this basis. Yet honor is an external good and it is rendered to a citizen only for certain kinds of actions, and in a manner consistent with a city's laws (1095b24-27;112b19-25;1130b30-35). The city's laws, however, are qualified and differ from those of other cities. Thus, the desire to be good without qualification raises the possibility that magnanimity may differ from the city in more than one way. On one level magnanimity does not honor that which most people in the city honor because the magnanimous one understands ethical virtue to be an end in itself. He does not look to the city for confirmation of his virtue because most citizens do not possess the capacity for virtue or the desire for its exercise which he does. Yet he exercises ethical virtue within the city to its fullest capacity. However, the desire to become good without qualification implies that the magnanimous one will hold a different view of the Good than the city because the city is good only in a qualified sense. However, it remains the case that it is necessary for the magnanimous one be committed to the political community in order to manifest virtue because virtue can come to be only within the political community. On the one hand, magnanimity will manifest the city's virtues and insofar as it does so, it will manifest itself differently in different cities. On the other hand, those who wish to be good without qualification will hold a different view of the Good for human beings than does the city.

The problem may be resolved if there exists more than one kind of magnanimity. The kind that is most apparent from the discussion in Book Four would be consistent with the laws of a city and the view of the Good assumed by the city. The intellectual virtues would necessarily be cultivated, yet they would remain within, or at least not seriously violate, the realm of thought consistent with the city's beliefs. However a second kind of magnanimity is also implied in an individual who desires to be good in the highest sense. Such a person would be concerned with understanding the nature of things as they actually are, and acting in accordance with this understanding. Hence he would be truthful not only in the sense of acting and speaking in accordance with his actual habits, but in the sense that he would seek to cultivate habits in accordance with the highest capacity of human nature. The magnanimous person in the higher sense must be concerned with more than practical knowledge, but also with the theoretical knowledge upon which practical knowledge rests. His concern for becoming good in the highest sense entails a concern with nature as such. This is not to argue that the former kind of magnanimity does not concern itself with nature as such. The emphasis on practical wisdom, however, will necessitate a different manifestation of this concern.

The proposition that there are two forms of magnanimity requires that attention be given to the actions through which each form is manifest. This has been implicit in the discussion so far, however, in emphasizing the interaction between both forms of magnanimity and the city it becomes clear that the issues arising from the dissonance between the individual and the city seem to be part of a larger question. The problems outlined thus far force us to ask how the higher (the good without qualification) relates to the lower (the qualified good manifest in the city), and how the theoretical relates to the practical. It is not only necessary to understand the relationship between the higher and lower kinds of magnanimity, but to discover whether both forms of magnanimity are compromised in a political community characterized by poorly formed laws. At what point will a person characterized by the lower kind of magnanimity cease to obey the laws of a community? To what extent does the political association have a claim on the behavior and beliefs of its citizens? How much influence does a political community have in the question of what kind of human being one should become? These are the questions that arise in the context of magnanimity and illuminate in outline the relationship between politics and virtue, and between an individual and the political community.

An important element in the discussion of these questions has come to light already in the form of political friendship or concord. The importance of friendship is underlined by the fact that two of the ten books of *N.E.* deal specifically with friendship. The relationship of friendship to magnanimity will be discussed at length at a later time; however, it is necessary to make some comments of an introductory kind. For Aristotle, friendship is the most necessary good for life. This is seen in the fact that no one would choose to live without friends even while in possession of all the other goods (1155a5). However, Aristotle points to a distinct kind of friendship which characterizes the virtuous person. Of the three kinds of friendship he discusses, that between virtuous people resembles the highest kind of friendship most of all. Virtuous people are good and are attracted to that which is also good. They find the company of other virtuous people naturally pleasant and the friendships stable and long lasting (1156b6-15). Their relationships are also useful because each is given an opportunity to practice virtue (1156b21-25). The other forms of friendship are not based to the same extent on similarity but are based primarily upon need or pleasure and to this extent reflect the incompleteness of the people involved. The similarity between the lower forms of friendship and the highest kind arises by accident insofar as the highest kind of friendship is both useful and pleasurable to those involved. Thus, the highest kind of friendship contains elements of the lower kinds (1157a30-35). It is because the lower kinds of friendships are grounded upon the participant's needs or pleasures that they are easily dissolved. When the needs of the participating individuals are met the basis of the friendship is undermined.

The highest kind of friendship is consistent with and actually rooted in the self-sufficiency of the virtuous person. A virtuous person possesses those qualities which make it possible for him to live with others as the best possible person he can be. This is by its very nature pleasing and fulfilling. It is not characteristic, then, for him to find in others the sources of pleasure or the basic needs which exist within himself. Hence, the friendship of a virtuous person naturally aims at the good of the other person who is seen as an equal because the similarity in the other reflects the desires and completeness of his own soul (1157a4-10,1157b25-30,1170b15-21). This qualifies the understanding of self-sufficiency, because it would seem that one who is self-sufficient does not require others to aim at his good. However, that each person is to some extent self-sufficient and complete does not imply that friendship is not important. Friendship and virtue are connected. The agent's completeness and self-sufficiency is connected with his virtue, and thus are consistent with friendship in some manner. Yet before the relationship between friendship and virtue itself can be determined, the character of virtue must first become clear. Although it has been shown that the friendship between virtuous people is pleasant and useful, we also know that a virtuous person has no need of friendship based merely upon the usefulness of the moment or mere pleasure. Virtuous people are attracted to each other because of their similarities, and therefore it is possible that the virtuous person's love of self will be important in the understanding of friendship.

In fact, self love is important in Aristotle's understanding of virtue because the truly virtuous person wishes to develop in accordance with the highest things for a human being. Thus he will be most concerned with the highest and most noble part of his own being, that is the rational part of the soul. Among friends, then, such a person will care most about those things which serve to cultivate and preserve the highest part of the soul, rather than wealth or property or those goods concerned only with the physical body (1168b23-34). This implies a knowledge of oneself and a love for oneself that is complete and may lead one to forgo the things valued most by a community. It may be the case that even though these things are good, they are not good (or not good enough) for the virtuous person (1113a30-34,1168a15-18). However, the desire to benefit the highest part of his soul will also lead the virtuous person to care for the friends and community from which he benefits. This disposition will lead the virtuous person to make sacrifices for friends or the community because this may be the most noble, and it may even be the case that not making the sacrifice will strip life of all meaning (1169a19,20,1124b7-9). This manner of self-knowledge and self-love is at the center of the virtuous person's life and it leads to a politically beneficial form of friendship characterized by a commitment to one's friends and a desire to benefit the community. The love of one's own which before seemed to impose practical necessities upon the political association appears as a salutary quality in this light.

The love of one's own and self-love also have an important part in the conclusion of *N.E.* when Aristotle argues that contemplation is the best activity and part of the best life. The discussion seems to follow naturally on the heels of a discussion emphasizing the love of the highest part of the soul. The conclusion that contemplation is the best life returns the reader to the beginning of *N.E.* where the question of the Good was first raised. It serves to indicate that the entire work is characterized by a developing theme of which the discussion of magnanimity is an integral part. Aristotle's conclusion that virtue and understanding are the sources of the highest activities for a human being implies that magnanimity is the first plateau in a teaching that includes, in addition to greatness in the ethical virtues, the highest development of the intellectual virtues. Both kinds of magnanimity will display the desire to understand the nature of things as they are because the magnanimous person must ensure that the cultivation of virtue is occurring in accordance with the highest potential of human nature. Theoretical wisdom is necessary to ensure that practical wisdom is in fact based upon right reason. This places correct deliberation and ultimately the desire for truth at the apex of the hierarchy of concerns characteristic of magnanimity. It is the function of any thinking being to know truth in so far as it involves reasoned actions which may be noble or base (1140b4-6). Magnanimity therefore involves a desire to understand the nature of things because actions must display prudence in its highest form.

Prudence, however, must be distinguished from wisdom which is understanding (rational intuition) and scientific knowledge of the things most honorable by their nature (1141a19,20,b3,4). Part of the difference between the higher and lower kinds of magnanimity is found in the former's regard for wisdom. Wisdom is concerned with the unchanging principles upon which scientific knowledge is based, and it stands in sharp relief against the changing world of politics and convention. The wise person must not only know what follows from principles, but must possess the truth about those principles (1141a18). Hence this person's knowledge will be the most complete and the most divine because those things which transcend the realm of becoming, and therefore politics, are more excellent than those which are subject to change (1141a21,1177b16-26,27-30). This implies wisdom's natural superiority over prudence, that is right reason about what is good for a particular person living within the changing world. As the highest good of the thinking part of the soul, wisdom is the most complete and necessary virtue for happiness.

Hence, the happiest person is one who engages in contemplation and aspires to become wise (1141a,1-6,1177a14-20).

However, it is of great importance that Aristotle has pointed to contemplation as a divine activity. The fact that contemplation is compared to a divine activity indicates that a tension exists between the divine and human. This may be the most important aspect of the question concerning the relationship between the high and the low, or the noble and base, because it points to a tension within human nature itself. Even if a human being wished to become like a god, it is not at all clear that it would be possible because he would be limited by his lower nature. However, if a person possesses complete ethical virtue, he may seem very much like a god in his standing among more ordinary people (1145a17-28). Understanding the relationship between magnanimity and the city, then, will shed considerable light on the relationship between the noble and the base, and nature and convention.The tension noted within the city may grow from a tension within human nature itself, and the place of that tension within the political community may be of considerable importance.5

Whether or not this is the case can only be seen after a detailed look at Aristotle's remarks on the best life and the relationship between magnanimity and that life. Is it necessary for all who pursue the contemplative life to be magnanimous? Does the contemplative life somehow reconcile magnanimity and the manifestation of complete virtue with the political community? The reader must fully understand the development of which magnanimity is a part and which culminates in Aristotle's comments on the contemplative life if these questions are to be resolved. The course that must be followed is then plain. We must first examine the initial account of magnanimity in Book Four. With the understanding of this discussion, we will turn next to examine magnanimity and the intellectual virtues. The discussion of friendship will then be the next reference point and finally a return to the question of the best life within the political community.

END NOTES

1. All references and quotes in this thesis will be taken from *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, translated with commentaries and glossary by Hippocrates Apostle, (Iowa: The Peripatetic Press), 1984. Any exception to this will be noted in the text.

2. This is not to argue that the honor accorded to a magnanimous person is unimpressive. One cannot forget that the magnanimous person has every other virtue and is therefore brave in battle, outstanding in politics and unblemished in his practice of magnificence.

The problem is that the magnanimous person must share the honors provided by the city with those less worthy and thereby be implicated as one no more worthy than they.

3. Education is very important in this regard. Its influence in teaching citizens what it is that the city regards as good and the conduct which follows from that good cannot be under estimated. This includes not only formal education but the education which occurs in the home and through customs (what today is called "socialization"). But it is important to note that childhood education is not enough; education must continue in adulthood (1103,14 ff.). Laws are needed to crystallize and solidify the habits

learned in childhood. Furthermore, laws are needed to encourage those who do not care for virtue to act appropriately (1179b7-16,1180a1-5).

4. It is of particular interest that Aristotle does not mention piety in connection with the laws. This is in stark contrast to Plato who makes constant reference to the gods in connection with law. Minos, for example was the son of Zeus who taught him the laws which served Crete so well. Plato's dialogue on law bears the name of this semi-divine being. Indeed, the very first word of Plato's *Laws* is the word "gods". But Aristotle grounds law firmly in nature by arguing that there are things which are just by nature. This tends to shift the emphasis away from both the gods and piety and toward human reason.

This is not to say that the gods are unimportant. Aristotle concludes that the best life for a human being resembles that of the gods. Again, it is the highest good to wish for friends that they become like the gods. Finally that part in humans which reasons is considered by Aristotle as the most divine. The divine is very important in *N.E.*, as we shall soon see.

5. One must not disregard the possibility that these tensions cannot be resolved. The Good for the individual and the Good for the city may prove to be as incommensurable as the life of the gods and the life of mortals is traditionally understood to be. In order to live the best life one must be able to live in relative harmony within the political community while also encompassing the divine. As the peak of ethical virtue, magnanimity involves the actor in making the choices which allow him to display both the divine and the merely human aspects of his character.

It is important that the questions arising from the study of ethics are philosophical insofar as they require one to understand the nature of the high and the low. This implies a connection between the theoretical and the practical which may throw considerable light on the nature of magnanimity and the relationship between politics and virtue.

Chapter Two

The Initial Account

Aristotle begins his initial account of magnanimity with the statement that it is concerned with great things. Accepting "great things" as the genus, he begins the task of identifying the specific kinds of great things with which it is concerned. In order to accomplish this, he sets out what appears to be a popular understanding of magnanimity:

> A [magnanimous] man is thought to be one who, being worthy of great things, requires of himself that he be worthy of them
>
> 1123b3,4

This implies that magnanimity has to do with living a life characterized by actions which reflect one's true worth. Worthiness, however, requires an external standard against which one is measured by others and upon which one makes a claim for regard by others. Thus, the magnanimous person must have some idea of his capacity, just as a person must have an idea of his strength if he requires of himself a high level of performance on a physically demanding job. The claim that the magnanimous person makes for himself is connected to the demand he places upon himself. His claim is justified because he knows the capacities of his soul and estimates that of others well enough to be certain that his capacities are greater. In the same way one with greater strength can demand more of himself and perform acts of greater physical labor, so it is with the magnanimous person (1123b6). If he was mistaken in this, he would not be virtuous; rather he would either be like the low minded person (literally small souled, *mikropsychos*), or the vain person. The former is worthy of greater things than he demands of himself, and therefore he demands less regard from others than he deserves. The latter claims for himself more regard from others than he is worth because he believes he is capable of more than he is in actuality. Magnanimity, then, may be defined as having proper regard for oneself given the natural capacities and limitations of one's body and soul.

There is, however, a problem involved in this definition because those who consider themselves great "do this in virtue of their worth", which is judged in accordance with the city's standards. The claims of most great people in a city are based on wealth, political power or noble birth, the goods most typically honored by a city (1124a21-23). However, this raises an important epistemological question for the magnanimous person. Virtue is the standard by which he defines his greatness, and to the extent that virtue is independent of the goods the city honors, he would hold that the claims of others are ill-founded. Yet he has also learned his virtue in the city. Is his standard of virtue not also grounded to some extent within the city? Against what is his magnanimity measured? How can the magnanimous person know that the belief he has about his worth is based upon knowledge and not errant opinion? The apparently popular definition cited above leads to questions which take one to the root of Aristotle's notion of ethical virtue.

Intellectual and ethical virtue come to be in the soul of a person in different ways. Intellectual virtue "grows mostly by teaching, and in view of this it requires experience and time" (1103a14,15). Ethical virtue, however, is not acquired through teaching, but through acting or habituation, in much the same way that an art is learned (1103a16,b1). As we shall see, ethical virtue provides the experience and time required for intellectual virtue. However, that ethical virtue is acquired through action shows that one is not graced with ethical virtue at birth in the way one may acquire a strong bodily constitution or a familial character trait. The human body grows according to principles of nature which cannot be changed through habituation.[1] During growth the capacities for some powers, such as sight, develop according to nature and become active automatically. Others are made active through repeated actions, for example, when one learns to be a brick mason or to play the guitar (1103b1). The difference between these two kinds of capacities is clear in that the ends of those which are automatic are determined according to nature, while the ends of those which require repeated actions are indeterminate. Ethical virtue is the perfection of the latter kind of capacities through activities, "for that which we are to perform by art after learning, we first learn by performing" (1103a34,35). These virtues do not occur automatically, but human nature allows us to learn and perfect them through action (1103a24,25).

This brings our attention to a characteristic of the soul which has important implications, particularly for the education through which virtue is learned. Previously we saw that the city provides the education to virtue in order to bring about concord and the acceptance of the city's view of justice and the good. We now perceive that human beings have a nature which receives this education as part of its growth to maturity. Thus, the soul is not neutral with respect to the dispositions it learns, but biased towards those which are beneficial. This is seen most clearly in the soul's possession of a raw capacity which Aristotle characterizes as "natural virtue" (1144b4). Natural virtue is the untrained propensity in the soul that leads one to act justly, or courageously when these actions are to our advantage. It is manifest, for example, when a child who is too young to know ethical virtue through habituation recognizes when someone is being unfair to him, or fights with spirit for a good which is important to him. It is natural virtue which provides the ground for the agent's ethical education insofar as the city builds on the propensities of natural virtue. The city harnesses this capacity and directs its growth by controlling its expression. It requires that an agent's actions be of a particular quality in order to be accepted as good, a requirement that admits of the possibility that the raw capacities have the potential to develop into good or bad habits. It is significant that habits become good or bad in civil society because it places ethical virtue in the political realm. It is possible for human beings to achieve their potential only in relation to others, "for it is by our *action* with other men in transactions that we are in the process of becoming just or unjust" (1103b14,15). The city has a strong interest in encouraging good actions, because "actions are the principle [cause] of the formation of habits" and good actions will teach the soul good habits (1103b31). Only within the city through interaction with others do people become in actuality what they are potentially.

It can be understood in light of the soul's bias toward its own good that desires are an important influence in the development of habits (1106a3,4).[3]The training involved in perfecting the capacities will therefore focus upon the agent's desires. Desires are for particular pleasures, and as such they are a constituent of intention which, as we shall see, is the moving principle of the action (1111b10-17,1139a31). The education the city provides, then, must aim at creating a disposition whereby the agent feels the right kind of desires. Failure to accomplish this is to risk corruption of the soul because:

> men are corrupted through pleasures and pains, that is, either by pursuing and avoiding the wrong pleasures and pains, or by pursuing and avoiding them at the wrong time, or in the wrong manner, or in one of the other wrong ways under which errors of conduct can be logically classified.
> 1104b22-24 (Rackham translation)

The desire for certain kinds of pleasure can corrupt the judgment, and this in turn may lead an agent to act inappropriately and introduce bad habits into the soul. Proper actions educate the passions and bring about the desires appropriate for a virtuous disposition.

The education to virtue, then, is an education of the whole soul. Its nature can be seen in Aristotle's examples of the art of building and the art of playing the lyre (1103b1). While both arts require certain kinds of knowledge and actions which rely on rational principles, the art of playing the lyre involves an additional sense of meter, musical tone, and the ability to interpret a series of tones in an appropriate manner. Like the musical education, virtue provides an education of more than the soul's rational elements. It educates the agent's rational intuition [*nous*], or the capacity to grasp the "ultimate particulars" of a situation (1143a1-5). This kind of understanding allows one to perceive the fundamental nature of a set of circumstances and to know immediately what actions are required (for example, courageous or temperate actions). As the raw capacities are refined through action, the intuition is also refined. Thus, the perfection of natural virtue through actions provides the ground upon which the rational intuition bases its judgment. As Aristotle tells us, "natural dispositions exist also in children and in brutes, but without intellect [*nous*] they appear to be harmful" (1144b9,10). For example, the capacity for courage is present at birth, but without proper training one may fail to learn to be courageous with regard to the right objects. This will have serious effects when it comes to defending the city. The educated intuition recognizes when courage is needed and the extent of the danger. It focuses the desires automatically upon the appropriate ends for the immediate circumstances. It is this process of habituation which forms the center of Aristotle's understanding of ethical virtue.

That the soul must form habits which allow a person to recognize the extent of the danger and the best appropriate actions provides an indication of the nature of the ethical virtues. The range of which passions are capable implies that an excess or deficiency of a particular passion can affect the quality of an action. A great deal of anger does not lead to the best actions when only a little is required to achieve an end. Similarly, the variety of situations in which a person may find himself indicates that his actions and passions must be controlled if they are going to be fitting. Thus, good actions educate the passions to adhere to a mid-point, or a mean. All people experience:

> fear, courage, *desire*, anger, pity and any pleasure or pain in general...but to have these feelings at the right times and for the right things and towards the right men and for the right purposes and in the right manner, this is the mean and the best, and it is precisely this which belongs to virtue.
> 1106b20-24

Acting in the proper manner brings about the habit of having the desires appropriate to the circumstances. Thus, acting in accordance to the mean educates the passions to adhere to the mean. Once cultivated, this disposition is exercised and strengthened through continued actions. For example, in the case of courage:

> by becoming habituated to show contempt for and endure what is fearful we become brave, and when we become brave we are most able to endure what is fearful.
> 1104b1-3

The relationship between action and virtue is reciprocal, and the perfection of one's natural capacities involves the agent in a life of continuous action through which his whole being is trained to act automatically in accordance with the mean.

The virtue of courage provides a particularly fine example of why adherence to the mean is difficult and requires such training. Pleasure and pain are not merely neutral experiences of an agent, but are a naturally bias towards the good of the agent. For example, a sick person may take pleasure in an acidic drink which can restore his health, while a healthy person may find the same drink extremely distasteful and even sickening (1153a2-6). The smell of bad food or the taste of stale water inhibits actions which may be unhealthy. Unpleasantness or pain deters ones from engaging in activities which are not good for him. On the other hand, pleasure draws one to engage in actions of a more beneficial nature. It is fitting, then, that when a faculty reaches its full capacity and is unimpeded in the performance of its proper function, the activity corresponding to that capacity is pleasant, or at least painless (1153a15). Pleasure leads one to engage in a beneficial activity. Yet not all actions which an agent finds pleasant are truly good for him or the city. It is for this reason Aristotle concludes that "virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains and disposes us to do what is best" (1104b28). The city focuses the agent's natural desires on those ends through which he may be a good citizen and pursue his own good.

This is consistent, however, only if the agent considers his own good and the good of the city to be the same to some extent. He must learn to be pleased with actions which benefit the city even though they are not naturally pleasant. It is in this light that the importance of the connection between natural justice and ethical virtue can be seen. The city's well-being is necessary for the well-being of each citizen, and thus its interest takes precedence over the desires of its citizens in some circumstances. For this reason there is justice to the city's requirement that its citizens exercise self-restraint, endure psychological and physical discomfort, or even face danger for its sake. Courage is an action which requires the agent to endure pain, and to this extent act in a manner which is unnatural. The city teaches a person to control his natural desires according to an external standard which aims at the good of others in addition to one's own good. As paradoxical as it seems, the ultimate goal of the city's education to virtue is to bring about a disposition whereby an agent is willing to choose to engage in activities which are not naturally the most pleasant, because he believes those actions to be the best. They are the most agreeable on a psychological level:

> for a man who abstains from [excessive] bodily pleasures and enjoys so doing is temperate, but a man who is oppressed by so doing is intemperate, and he who faces dangers and enjoys it or at least is not pained by so doing is brave, but he who is pained by so doing is a coward
>
> 1104b6-9

The virtuous disposition is such that a person finds it more pleasant to act in accordance with the city's standards than to violate them because he believes that such actions are the best. Thus, as the above quote illustrates, one is temperate or brave when such actions are not painful or are more pleasing to him than the alternatives. This is what it means to have the right desires at the right time and in the right manner (1106b22-24).

This illuminates the essential difference between civic virtue and virtue as it is understood by the virtuous person. The virtuous person acts because he believes his actions are good in themselves, and he finds acting in a contrary manner unpleasant or even painful. Therefore, he does not need additional compulsion to perform acts which are good for the city. We noted in chapter one, however, that most citizens consider pleasure and their own satisfaction as the highest good. This is not compatible with natural standards of justice because the city must look to the good of its entire population, and it must remain intact to achieve this goal. To this end the laws sanction the use of pain in order to minimize the intensity of base desires which may harm the community (1104b17,18). Those who act from fear of punishment engage in actions of a less virtuous kind than those who act because the actions in themselves are good. The first kind of citizen engages in acts of civic virtue which benefit the city, but are performed out of fear and not because the acts are good in themselves. The second kind of citizen is truly virtuous (1105a26-29).

The object of the city's education to virtue, then, is to give a definite form to the soul's natural capacities. This form will not be the same in each case because that which is good for each city will differ according to the immediate circumstances in which the city exists (1134b30-35). The city therefore imposes its conventions upon the natural capacities. Its standards are good because they benefit all the citizens, but it is clear that they do not reflect that which is by nature the highest Good for all human beings -or for the human being as such- because the standards differ from city to city. To this extent, the conventions are based on opinion. However, in so far as the laws refer to the mean, the point between the excess and the deficiency which the perfection of the soul's capacities exhibit, the laws reflect that which is natural in human beings. The mean is the quality of a virtue which makes an object able to perform its natural function well (1106a14-16). Thus, when a person has reached maturity, the virtues of his body (which are to be distinguished from the moving principles which caused the body's growth) and the virtues (habits) of the soul come together to bring to completion his potential. Aristotle's examples of the eye and the horse illustrate this.

The eye is an object which, like all things made of flesh, assumes its shape according to the dictates of nature. That there is no other possibility in terms of its formation and structure shows that it does not display a "habit" any more than an oak tree which drops its leaves in the fall and goes dormant for the winter. The growth of the eye, however, is understood only by reference to its end, which is sight. To attempt to understand the eye without reference to its function would be to fundamentally misunderstand it. Yet sight is not simply an end in itself, but plays an important part in the life of the organism in which it is found. The immediate end of the eye cannot be understood without reference to the whole of which it is a part. Again, the function of the eye is dependent upon light; however, in circumstances where the eye is deprived of light, the virtue or goodness of the eye remains the same. The end is constant, even when the means of performing its function is removed. On the other hand, if the eye is damaged, it is less virtuous because it is less able to perform its function properly. It is understood that the eye is "well-disposed" when its growth is complete and it has taken shape in structure and form. That which makes it perform its function well is its capacity to see which follows from its growth. Its virtue is understood both in terms of its form and the capacity which follows upon its form.

In the same way that the eye cannot be understood without reference to the organism of which it is a part, so it is in the case of a human being. The growth of the body to maturity does not complete the potential of a human being; a person's potential is completed in political society. Aristotle's example of the horse is a useful illustration of this. To begin with, there is a difference between a good horse simply, and a horse that is good for "running and carrying its rider and facing the enemy" (1106a21). Horses are good because they are able to survive. Their size and strength, and their ability to run and move swiftly over certain kinds of terrain contributes to this end. However, these are qualities unique to a horse which also make it a suitable choice for certain human purposes. Its power and size facilitate both domestic and martial activities and help people to overcome natural limitations. These uses are imposed upon the horse by human beings and are not involved in a horse being good as such. (This is seen easily in the case of non-domesticated animals where, in contrast to animals domesticated for a variety of purposes, there is only one standard of excellence.) One would misunderstand what a horse is if he were to judge all horses according to the criteria of a war horse. It is not natural for horses to carry anyone, let alone "face the enemy". The turmoil which a war horse must endure (swirling dust, the noise of dying men and horses, and a profusion of various harmful projectiles to which a horse cannot be oblivious) is distinctly human. This brings an important point to the fore; namely that a horse possesses a capacity which many other animals do not: domesticability. This quality is independent of the physical and dispositional qualities that make a horse good in the wild, and it means that a variety of differing behaviors (habits) can be superimposed upon the dispositions existing naturally in the animal. The purposes for which a horse is trained and bred naturally qualify the characteristics seen as virtues, and thus its training and breeding will involve the accentuation of certain of its natural qualities and the diminution or suppression of others (compare a work horse to a race horse, for example). The purposes of domesticated animals are instrumental, whereas the wild horse may be considered an end in itself. However, it is this instrumental quality which makes the horse such an apt illustration for Aristotle's purposes.

The accentuation of certain natural qualities that occurs in the training and breeding of horses provides an excellent example of the mixture of the natural with the artificial that occurs in the education to virtue provided by the political community. However, the virtue of human beings is unique because human beings are rational animals who possess both foresight and recollection. Where the training of a horse requires the trainer to repeat the same actions in order to bring about a single behavior, a person may comprehend what behavior is desired and perform it correctly the first time. He may also reflect upon it, see the intended end, and modify his behavior to achieve the end in various ways. This is especially important because the mean, which is the essence of a virtue, is an understanding of appropriate human actions which can be arrived at only by the use of rational faculties (1107a5). This is true not only of the arithmetical mean (6 is the mean between 10 and 2), but of the mean in regard to an individual's actions as well. Actions must be suited to the situation, and this is always a matter of rational judgment. It is in this activity that the mixture of the natural and the conventional will manifest itself, because people will desire to act according to the standards honored by their city. That each determines the mean through reason is natural. There is an order (disposition) to the soul which places the rational in control of the irrational.[4]

This implies that virtuous actions per se are necessarily voluntary, as they are not in the case of the war horse. The horse performs its functions only after repeated exercises, and only if the rider maintains control of the beast. The acts of a human being, however, are undertaken as a result of choice. Reason is employed to consider the contingencies of a situation and determine the best action. For example, if one has come across a crime in progress and someone needs immediate aid, courage will be different for a person with great size and strength than for one who is much smaller; furthermore, circumstances will affect one's decision. Actions in a dark and deserted alley will be different than in daylight near a place where there may be people. The line between rashness and courage differs for different kinds of people and according to the situation. Thus in his discussion of the mean, Aristotle states that "when related to us, it neither exceeds nor falls short [of what is proper to each of us], and this is neither just one thing nor the same for everyone" (1106a31, 32). Ethical virtue is "a habit, disposed toward *action* by deliberate choice being at the mean relative to us" (1106b35). The habit imparts a propensity to act in a particular manner which involves the exercise of reason in ascertaining the mean in the present circumstances. The mean itself is "defined by reason". Its definition as a mid-point is theoretical, but all particular virtuous actions tend to manifest the mean in some form. In specific actions the mid-points may differ, and thus the mean of a specific action is defined "as a prudent man would define it" (1107a1). It is the prudent person who has the capacity to act according to the mean in each situation, and it is his actions against which all actions are measured. He acts with a clear understanding of the situation and a proper estimation of his own capacities and limitations.

We have therefore come full circle. The magnanimous person has brought to the peak of development the capacities of both his body and soul, and he believes that he is worthy of greater things than other citizens. His virtue has been learned in the city and he has been able to compare his ability with that of others. Thus, he knows that his capacity for virtue is greater relative to other citizens. Yet this certainty is qualified because his worth is coterminous with his city. He does not know if he is worthy in an unqualified sense because the city's education is based upon an opinion concerning the Good for human beings. The magnanimous person therefore assumes the Good which the city assumes. Yet because he is "at the highest point with respect to greatness" and at the mean with respect to the "rightness" of thought about his capacity relative to others, he is rightly concerned with honor.

Aristotle does not introduce honor into his discussion directly. Instead he emphasizes the fact that honor requires a comparative judgment of a person's worth relative to others. It is an external good rendered in accordance with external standards and dependent upon those who render it:

> Now the term "worth" is used for the external goods; and we would posit the greatest of these to be that which we render to the gods, or that which men in high position mostly aim at, or that which is the prize awarded to the most noble. Such is honor.
> 1123b18,19

That honor is the greatest external good is seen by the fact it is rendered to the greatest beings: the gods. The gods are beings far more noble than humans because they are above the world of change. They are said to possess the natural self-sufficiency and goodness most admired by people, and they possess these qualities without the education of the soul which human beings require. The goodness for which they are admired is above political society, and thus they are above the laws and conventions of political society. The laws are expedients for which the gods have no need. They gain no strength through striving as is the case with human beings, but are thought to possess by nature the strength for which human beings strive. They have no base desires, and they are always pleased by the same actions (1178b16, 17). Their natures are simple or complete, like a faculty which functions unimpeded after it has come to rest at the completion of its growth (1154b25-28). They are pleased by one kind of action because they do not possess a compound nature, that is a nature with both noble and base desires. It follows that with no base desires and a complete nature, the gods focus automatically on the greatest good, and this Good exists in accordance with reason (1098a5-8). Therefore, the existence of the gods is thought to be rational, or resemble those qualities which human beings admire most.

The gods are thought to possess by their nature the highest kind of completeness of which a human being can conceive. Their natures are like works of excellence from which nothing can be subtracted or added (1106b11). Hence, their nature possesses nobility or beauty [*kalon*]. Beauty is a quality which is manifested in perfection or completeness. That from which nothing can be taken or added is a manifestation of being in its fullness. This is not only a quality which makes an object pleasant to perceive or hear, but it appeals to human nature which is in the process of becoming and therefore incomplete and imperfect. Only when the capacities are fully developed and to the greatest extent possible unimpeded in the performance of their functions is the growth of a human being complete. When completed in maturity, each of the faculties has a simple nature similar to that of the gods. The gods, however, are thought to possess the highest level of perfection, and thus they provide a conception of completeness and nobility far superior to that of a mere human being. This conception is able to turn one's attention to that which is higher, greater and more noble than oneself. This is important because human nature is not simple (1154b23). People feel base desires, they need laws and politics to limit the effects of those desires, and they must strive to become good. Thus, the honor they render to the gods is beneficial to them because they are drawn to admire and to some extent imitate those beings which are said to possess the completeness toward which they grow.

Insofar as its chief aim is to help its citizens to grow toward maturity or completeness, the city's highest goal is to bring about some kind of nobility or beauty in human beings (1094b11) It is appropriate, then, that honor is rendered to those in high positions within the city. However, Aristotle notes that honor is also awarded to the most noble in the city. That these two are separate implies that the most noble people are not always found in high positions in the city. Those in high positions deserve honor because of the benefits they bring the city, yet their excellence in civic virtue does not necessarily imply excellence in ethical virtue. The honor rendered to those who are noble, however, is rendered because insofar as their actions accord to the mean, they possess completeness and perfection. Their actions are characterized by beauty, and this turns the attention of others towards that which is truly noble. What is attributed to the gods by nature is achieved by human beings through virtue (1106b12).

In this light it is worthy to recall the juxtaposition of magnanimity with magnificence [*megaloprepia*]. The magnificent person has the capacity and ability to use a fixed sum of money to make his work more impressive and beautiful than another (1122b15). He surrounds himself with opulence and beauty, but does so for the sake of evoking admiration on the part of others because "a work which is worth most is that which has greatness and is noble" (1122b16). Such works turn the attention of others to higher things and are thus fit for contemplation (1122b17). The magnificent person is able to do this better than others because he has perfected a capacity for the use of money. He has cultivated a "sense" which others lacking the capacity for magnificence find it impossible to acquire. In a similar way the magnanimous one has the capacity and ability to make his actions fitting and appropriate in each situation. All his actions are lacking in nothing and are thus possessed of nobility. They turn the attention of people to that which is truly noble because they manifest a capacity for nobility in actions which is beyond that of others.

The magnanimous person is recognized for having cultivated and so habituated the virtues that they are second nature. There are few, if any, who are equal to him:

> for a better man is always worthy of greater things and the best is worthy of the greatest. Thus a man who is truly [magnanimous] should be a good...man; and greatness in every virtue would seem to be a mark of a [magnanimous] man.
>
> 1123b27-30

He is excellent in all respects, and his actions which will be without excess or deficiency will reflect this excellence (1107a25-27,*Physics*,225b10ff). Indeed as we shall see, he possesses a nature similar to the gods in that he will be temperate, possessing no base desires. However, his virtue is also human because it has been learned in the city and reflects the city's view of the Good. Magnanimity, then, is the capacity to give each virtue a noble aspect, an aspect of beauty and completeness which is beyond the capacity of others in the city. Thus, Aristotle concludes, magnanimity "is a sort of ornament [*kosmos*] of the virtues; for it makes them greater, and it cannot exist without them" (1124a1,2). *True* magnanimity is extremely hard, and accordingly very rare. The conclusion is uncompromising; greatness in each virtue is necessary, and each must be second nature to the one who would be magnanimous. The magnanimous person manifests the same virtues as other citizens, but he is distinguished from them both by the fact that he does so to a greater degree and with less effort, and by the completeness of his virtue.

Having mastered each ethical virtue, the magnanimous one is the standard by which all claims to honor within the city are measured. As Aristotle states, the "virtuous man differs from others most by perceiving the truth in each case, being like a standard or measure for them" (1113a34; cf:1166a10-18,1176a4-23). His actions and his intentions are the highest completion of the education to virtue provided by the city's customs and laws, and it is this which sets him apart. By the city's standards, the magnanimous person is just without qualification. He understands that each virtue is an excellence of the soul and is only acquired through proper actions. Thus, he desires to perform deeds which truly reflect his psychological, physical and material capacities, and benefit his soul by maintaining the perfection of his virtues. He will be reluctant to accept gifts from others unless it is absolutely necessary, "for it is not the mark of a man who does good to others to receive beneficence readily (1120a35). Similarly, he will acquire wealth fairly, and to the extent that it facilitates the growth and practice of his virtue. The magnanimous person is concerned with the actions which bring about excellence in his soul and thus he does not possess the grasping disposition or the propensity to break the laws that the unjust person possesses.

The soul of the magnanimous person is virtuous according to a mean different from those with common virtue, because he considers his actions as one with complete ethical virtue.[5]His great concern for honor therefore tempers his actions. For example, those who are truly brave act according to what is noble, facing danger in the right manner "according to the situation" (1115b15-20). The magnanimous person, however, will not move quickly to throw himself into battle for the sake of the honor or nobility arising from the exercise of one dimension of his virtue. He will make sure that his actions reflect the nobility of complete ethical virtue made greater by magnanimity. He will make his actions honorable for justice and good temper, in addition to courage. His concern for honor will cause him to take his time and make each act display the greatest virtue possible (cf.112513-15). This will be done as an end in itself and not for the honor these actions bring. For him, "no honor could equal the worth of his complete virtue", and he receives the honors of other virtuous people with a measured amount of enthusiasm (1124a6). He accepts it because other virtuous people naturally hold magnanimity in esteem. His actions please them, and honor is the highest form of recognition for surpassing virtue. Although pleasing the magnanimous one to some degree, their honoring will be most beneficial for themselves as an impetus to become more virtuous.

The magnanimous one is the pattern upon which those with common virtue can model themselves. He is the best example of a human being and it is his desire to be honored as such. Given that the magnanimous person truly desires to be the best example of a human being, his concern will be first and foremost for his own greatness, and especially that of his own soul. Thus, the political community must take second place. It now appears that the opposite conclusion has been reached. The presence of magnanimity does not guarantee unconditional involvement in or commitment to the city; nor is there any guarantee that the city will recognize the involvement that does occur as being the most honorable. The magnanimous one realizes that virtuous actions benefit his soul because virtue is the manifestation of the soul's completeness, and that- most importantly -the virtuous disposition of the soul is strengthened by such actions. Understanding this is the key to both his attachment to the city and the dissonance between the city and magnanimity. He is attached to the city because only within the city will he be able to perform virtuous acts. Yet his actions will be recognized as the best in every instance only if a) the city is his equal in justice and b) it honors what he honors. This is problematic because the city will not be his equal in justice, unless it honors what he honors. However, most of the citizens are ordinary people who pursue pleasure as the highest good, and for the most part, they honor what is expedient to this end.

The magnanimous one honors most those things which make the greatest contribution to the greatness of his soul. The good of the soul is not always served by the goods which a city typically honors. Wealth, political power and even noble birth and their attendant honors can be harmful in some instances (1129b5). Properly regarded, these goods are not ends in themselves, nor are the honors which accompany them the greatest. They are means whereby the actions which truly benefit the soul can be performed (1099b1-3). Such actions are their own reward, and the honors which follow are secondary. Hence, if the honor connected with these "is of little worth to a man, the others [ie. wealth, political power, good luck] will be of little worth to him also" (1124a21,23). This is why "[magnanimous men] seem to be disdainful" (1124a21,b6). They do not strive like others, and in fact "avoid going after things held in honor or things in which others excel," because they are above such things. Yet because of their virtue they are likely to possess political power, wealth, and honors, which they proceed to treat as if they were of secondary importance (1124b,23,24). The goods which contribute to existence support the highest goods indirectly and accordingly, the magnanimous one will be moderately disposed toward them. He distinguishes between what is expedient and what is necessary if one is to live the best life.[6]This distinction is a manifestation of practical wisdom which is learned through ethical virtue. However, the city does not make this distinction because it is benefitted by these expedient goods, and thus it honors them. In so doing, it gives ordinary people who do not possess ethical virtue public honors on the same level as those who are truly virtuous. This confirms the popular understanding that these are the greatest goods. The view of most citizens will stand in sharp contrast to that of the magnanimous one, and the tension between the city and magnanimity will center around the honors towards which each looks.

Those who possess common virtue and are characterized by Aristotle as "men of culture and *action*", must be distinguished from ordinary people. People with common virtue strive to be honored by the city, but they do this to assure themselves of their own goodness (1095b27,28). Their desire for honor is for the sake of virtue. However, ordinary people consider the goods which the city honors as ends in themselves. These goods are pleasant and ordinary people consider pleasure to be the greatest good (1147b24-34,1148a23-33). It is for this reason that Aristotle writes:

> Good luck, too, is thought to contribute to [magnanimity]. For men of high lineage or political power or wealth consider themselves worthy of

> honor; for they are superior and that which exceeds in what is good is thought to be more worthy of honor.
> 1124a21-23

For most citizens the very possession of political power or wealth constitutes evidence of magnanimity. They choose these goods as ends in themselves not realizing that their choice betrays a failure on their part to make the distinction between the highest goods and those which are expedient. The city does not teach them to make this distinction and, with their belief that wealth and political power are ends in themselves, this leads them to make an unwarranted (unjust) claim to magnanimity (1104a27). The claim is unwarranted because they do not possess complete virtue and their actions are not for the sake of virtue but for pleasure. Their lack of virtue implies a lack of practical wisdom which limits their ability to act according to reason (1124b2). Consequently, it is not easy "for them to bear the fruits of good luck with propriety" (1124a31). Although their claim to greatness and even a certain amount of *hubris* is justified because of their contribution to the city's well-being, their virtue is only civic virtue and their haughtiness only an imitation of magnanimity (1124b3). According to the standards of magnanimity, these people show contempt. They are contemptuous in that they are vain and claim what is not rightly their own (ie. honor equivalent to a magnanimous person's). However, they are also contemptuous toward truly virtuous people because in their pride they fail to recognize true virtue.

The failure of ordinary people to recognize true virtue is a reflection of the city itself. The city is an association which comes into being because of the natural limitations human beings experience in providing all their needs, and it continues to exist through expediency (1160a9-13). It must of necessity honor the goods and the conduct which contributes to its well-being because it must benefit the whole of its population. Its laws and customs therefore emphasize civic virtue and it honors the wealthy and those in high positions even if they are not completely virtuous. Of course, the city encourages its citizens to honor the whole of ethical virtue, but it is beyond the city's capability to provide a rationale for exercising ethical virtue to its fullest at all times. Ethical virtue depends on the intent of the agent, but no city has the power to assure that the intentions of all its citizens are noble (1178a35).

The tension between the magnanimous person and the rest of the city, then, ultimately lies in the limitations of the nature of the people who make up the city. Most of its citizens are ordinary people who do not distinguish between what is expedient and what is best by nature. This is in part an error of inductive logic. "Ordinary people," Aristotle states, "appear to be quite slavish choosing deliberately a life of beastly pleasures, but their view has support because many men of means share the tastes of Sardinapalus" (1095b20-22). They perceive that in practice ordinary people are found at all stations of political society, and they conclude that the goods which those in superior positions pursue must be the greatest. Moreover, their mistake is incorrigible. As we saw in Chapter One, "what men regard the good or happiness to be seems to come from their ways of living", and these people have chosen pleasure as the greatest good. Their actions are in accordance with their lower natures. They do not possess practical wisdom and therefore do not comprehend virtuous actions. While this does not completely inhibit their ability to exercise civic virtue, their intentions and motives are corrupt. What is most valued and honored by ordinary people pervades the whole of the political community. This problem is compounded by the fact that what is honored by the city is not the most honorable by nature.

The magnanimous one, then, stands above the city. He possesses a degree of self-sufficiency in that he acts for the sake of virtue and is pleased in the knowledge that his actions are the best actions possible. He does not need confirmation of the goodness of his actions from anyone but himself. This is the disposition of one who possesses goods which are ends in themselves. The awareness that one desires and performs actions which are good in themselves "taken by itself makes one's way of life worthy of choice and lacking in nothing" (1097b15). Virtuous actions possess a certainty that other actions do not; they are "more enduring than even scientific knowledge" (1100b14). He will therefore perform his civic duties with unsurpassed ability, and will not be unduly affected when he is honored as though he were equal with ordinary people. He will perform the greatest acts on the battlefield and be "unsparing of his life", even though the city honors all acts of valor equally (1116a18-20,29-33). He stands above the city in the knowledge of his superiority.

It is for this reason that he renders services to others but is ashamed if services are given to him. Rendering services is the mark of superiority and it is noble because "to treat others well without seeking return is noble" (1163a1). The magnanimous person will desire to render the greatest and the best services to others because these acts are good in themselves. He knows that the highest goods are goods of the soul and that virtue is such a good. Thus, he renders the greatest goods by being the best possible example of a human being and creating in others the desire to be like himself. All his conduct in the city will help others toward virtue and thus, magnanimity itself renders the greatest and most honorable benefit (1163b13, 14). When he renders a particular benefit or when he returns one, he will be able to retain his superior position because he is most able to give the greatest goods. In the one case, he will acquire honor, and where he gives a greater good than that which was rendered to him, "the man who did a service first will be still indebted and will have been treated well" (1124b13).[7]His self-sufficiency and greatness will prove his superiority and create in others the desire to be like himself.

It is for this reason that he recalls the benefits he has given to others with pleasure but remembers those rendered to him with displeasure, although it must be added that Aristotle gives no indication that he simply forgets them (1124b15-22). To forget would be ungrateful, and being ungrateful is a vice. The magnanimous person is truly grateful when services are rendered to him, especially if the benefits are rendered on the field of battle and mean life to the magnanimous one. Furthermore, it is possible that circumstances may be such that he requires the help of others. Aristotle notes this possibility exists when he states that "it is a mark of [magnanimity], to never, or hardly ever, ask for help" (1124b18,cf.:1125a10). There will be no shame on his part if necessity leaves him with no alternative but to seek the help of others, and he will be truly grateful. Yet the magnanimous person will strive to be in the place of the superior whenever it is possible.

The magnanimous person will display his greatness for all to see, and the consequence of this is that his love of truth is magnified. He wishes to live before others as he in fact *is*; inconsistency between his words and actions is to be avoided (1127b1,2). Consequently, he speaks and acts openly, and regards secrecy as a mark of fear, and falseness as an evil (1124b27,28). However, openness implies that he will be outspoken with respect to his likes and dislikes, including those in friendship. This creates a tension between political behavior and truthfulness. Knowing that it is crude to make others appear lowly in his presence, he overcomes the problem by speaking ironically. His actions will be the same as others, albeit with greater ability and less effort, but there is no need for him to diminish the civic goodness in the acts of fellow citizens. To overwhelm the less virtuous with his ability is crude (1124b23). He will act with them, but acting virtuously will be its own reward and he will only be moderately pleased at other rewards. His actions and words will be chosen with an eye to making them strive to become better, not resentful at his superiority.

His actions will be similar among the rich and powerful who do not have a just claim to magnanimity. Around these people he will appear dignified by allowing the full breadth of magnanimity to be seen. Whenever possible, he will show his superiority either in his singular attachment to those things he knows to be the most worthy, or in his capacity for the greatest and noblest deeds. The magnanimous person will take the lead when "the honor of the deed to be done is great", because he can perform the deeds more nobly and honorably than others (1124b25,26). However, he will not do this in a crude fashion because such behavior is offensive and undignified;

it is also imprudent because it would turn the city's powerful against him. As we shall soon see, this is an important consideration for the magnanimous person. If it is inappropriate to overtly take the lead in certain actions, the magnanimous one will make suggestions or plant the seeds for future thought on the part of those in higher positions. At no time will he "submit to a life which pleases another person (unless this be a friend), for this is slavish" (1124b31-25a3). It would be entirely inconsistent for such a person, in the presence of the wealthy and powerful, to "submit" to or go after those things they honor and pursue. This resembles the flatterer, or sycophant, who will make every effort to be like those from whom he desires respect. (With a friend the problem will not occur because a friend will honor the same things he does. This will be shown in the next chapter.) The magnanimous one, as we have seen, does not need others to confirm his virtue to him. Magnanimity is the completion and perfection of the ethical part of the soul and it is for others with more common virtue to strive to be more like the magnanimous one.

Aristotle's initial account of magnanimity has shed a great deal of light on the relationship between magnanimity and the city. The magnanimous one has achieved excellence in every ethical virtue and is the paragon of excellence as it is perceived by the city. As one who is above all others with respect to virtue, the magnanimous person is rightly concerned with honor. He knows that his concern is justified because he has learned virtue within the city through interaction with others. He has proven to himself and others that his soul is truly great and that he has a superior capacity for virtue. Such knowledge leads him to distinguish between the good of his soul and the goods of the body for which the the city cares. His main concern is for the growth and continued strength of his capacity for virtue. He is therefore concerned with performing acts which set him apart from others. However, it is here that the dissonance begins to emerge. He understands that the greatest goods are those which are ends in themselves and benefit his soul. For the magnanimous person, the only goods which can accomplish this are virtuous acts, because these strengthen the disposition of his soul and bring him honor. Honor, as we have seen, is desirable not only for itself, but because through honor others are given the desire to strive for virtue. Ethical virtue is therefore the highest end toward which the magnanimous one strives. It is beneficial both to the magnanimous one and the city.

The city, however, does not recognize the virtue of magnanimity as superior, but honors magnanimity in the same way it honors civic virtue. The reason for this is that the city finds its genesis in the natural limitations human beings must overcome to provide the goods necessary for life. The fair distribution of property and the acquisition and maintenance of material goods therefore comprises much of the city's business. These goods are a necessary part of human existence, but they are not ends in themselves. They are expedients through which the city brings about the completion of each citizen's potential (1094a1-11). This is accomplished through ethical virtue, and thus the city will encourage its citizens to become virtuous. However it is not capable of ensuring that ethical virtue is cultivated to its fullest extent. The city's focus is on civic virtue and the cultivation of concord between the citizens. It ensures that they will exercise virtues such as courage which are necessary for the city's survival (1103b3-7,1155a25-27). Its concern is for all its citizens, and not simply those capable of and interested in becoming fully virtuous.

The general nature of its concerns implies that the city of necessity must aim at providing for all needs, including those of the lower aspects of human nature. Hence, it will honor those things which contribute to its own well-being and the well-being of its citizens. This is why wealth and political power are honored. These contribute to the good of the city: political power through the administration of laws, and wealth by its material contributions in the form of temples, triremes or other goods which add to the reputation and glory of the city. These goods benefit the city because they satisfy the ordinary people within the city, and because they provide the goods necessary for those who are able to become virtuous in the higher sense.

The magnanimous one understands the expedient nature of the goods with which the city is chiefly concerned. However, he knows that the highest goods are goods for the soul and that his soul is superior to his body in the same way an artist is superior to the tools he uses (1098a7,1161a35). His life does not harmonize easily with the city, because with its primary concern being the needs of the body and the practical concerns of organizing itself, the city does not tend to the highest needs of his soul. The chief concern of the magnanimous person is higher than the concerns of the city. The magnanimous one stands at the completion of a process of becoming, and has attained the kind of completion assumed to be characteristic of the gods. His highest goal is to *be* in the city, and thus he is concerned with the kind and quality of his actions. While he engages in the political activities of the city, the goods to which he aspires are, like the gods, above politics. The good of his soul remains the same even though the character of the city and the circumstances of his life may change. Thus, disharmony arises because the magnanimous one lives and acts within the city as a complete human being. He cares most for his soul, and therefore he continually displays only a moderate regard for that which by nature the city is most concerned. He holds himself to be the best and most complete example of the city's education toward virtue, and he desires to distinguish himself in this regard. The relationship between the magnanimous person and the city is the relationship between the highest possible achievement in human virtue given the limits of his knowledge, and civic virtue as it is manifested in "ordinary citizens".

Yet that the magnanimous one is the highest example of the city's virtue implies that the city's aim actually goes beyond making people good citizens. Its aim is not only to make good citizens, but good human beings. It demands civic virtue, but meeting the obligations of the city does not necessarily make one a good human being. Civic virtue is part of ethical virtue, but ethical virtue is higher and more complete. This implies that the city exists for the sake of ethical virtue and not, as it appeared at first, ethical virtue for the sake of the city. The object of politics is to allow a citizen to be within the city to the fullest of his capacities. Thus, "that which is aimed at by politics and the highest of all goods achievable by human *action*" are not necessarily the same (1109a15,16;cf.1094b7-10). The highest good achievable by human action is beyond that for which the city can effectively care, because the highest good is a good for the soul.

The political community itself seems to strike a dissonant chord. When the city's aims are achieved, good human beings will care most for the good of their souls and deprecate those things with which the city is most concerned. Yet this is only apparently the case. By its nature, ethical virtue depends upon the community for its cultivation and its continuance insofar as it requires people toward whom one can act and goods with which to act (1178a23-34). The self-sufficiency of the magnanimous one is therefore limited. He desires to act for the sake of the good of his soul, but he must necessarily take into account the tenor of political society. For this he looks towards the city's laws which form the framework in which he will manifest his virtue. Yet the concern for the soul returns one to the epistemological question with which this chapter began. The laws and customs of a city are made with the aim of cultivating good character in each citizen, however, one city's laws and customs are not the same as those of other cities. This variance implies that the laws and customs of each city are not based upon knowledge but upon opinion, and this implies in turn that the virtue in which the magnanimous one is accomplished is also based upon opinion. His greatness must be qualified because he has habituated the virtue which the city teaches. He is correct in his belief that he leads the best life within the city, but concerning the question of his life being the best in an unqualified manner he is limited to opinion. The account of magnanimity presented in Book Four therefore leads the reader to considerations concerning the best life. The completion of ethical virtue is relative to the city in which a person is nurtured. Thus, the manifestation of magnanimity will vary from city to city. None of these kinds of magnanimity is virtue without qualification. No form of government outside that belonging to the best city can provide "the education in virtue of which a man becomes good without qualification" (1130b27-29). The forms of magnanimity manifest in the various regimes each point toward a higher kind of magnanimity, one that is complete and manifests itself within the best city.

This highlights the importance of the fact that Aristotle has not yet provided an account of intellectual virtue, and this is necessary because ethical virtue involves the use of reason or practical wisdom. While the presence of practical wisdom has been assumed throughout the entire discussion of magnanimity, it is not possible to fully understand magnanimity or comprehend the relationship of magnanimity to the community without first understanding the intellectual virtues. The most important question to answer, then, is what light the intellectual virtues can shed upon the nature of magnanimity and its relationship with the city. Will the difference between wisdom and practical wisdom be the difference between the higher and lower kinds of magnanimity? How will Wisdom and practical wisdom manifest themselves outside the best regime? With these questions, we are now ready to turn to Aristotle's account of the intellectual virtues to complete the account of magnanimity.

END NOTES

1. Cf. *Physics*, 192b13-23.

2. cf. *On The Soul*, 413a20-414a28.

3. *Metaphysics*, 1048a10,11.

4. It is worth emphasizing again, however, that the soul can be corrupted through the introduction of bad habits, and the faculty of good judgment distorted. The rational faculties require time and experience through which the rational intuition is trained. Thus, even though the agent may possess a rational nature, through the introduction of bad habits the passions may exercise an excessive influence on his actions. This confirms again that the virtues do not arise by nature (ie. automatically) even though the virtuous disposition which exercises the rational faculties to ascertain the mean in each circumstance may be the best order.

5. In the discussion that follows, I will designate those who do not manifest magnanimity but nonetheless possess virtue as those with "common virtue". I will also use Aristotle's distinction between "ordinary people" and those of "culture and action" (common virtue) made at 1095b20-25. Ordinary people are the majority of people whose passions exercise an excessive influence in their decisions, and who consider pleasure to be the highest good.

6. The distinction between what is expedient and what is necessary for the best life is not simple and straight forward, and I do not wish to suggest that it is or that the magnanimous person will view it as such. Some of the goods which are expedient, for example material goods, are necessary for life and thus, the external goods and the goods of the body are themselves divided into the necessary and unnecessary goods.

7. In this context it is noteworthy that Burnet comments that by "**ho hyparchas** is meant the man who *starts* the interchange of benefits, `the original benefactor.'.... In the same way *ho huparchas* is the aggressor in war as opposed to *ho amunomenos*" (transliteration mine). From, The Ethics of Aristotle, ed. John Burnet, (London: Methuen & Co., 1900), p.184.

Chapter Three

The High and the Low

1. The Intellectual Virtues

To fully appreciate Aristotle's treatment of intellectual virtue, we must keep in mind that the chief aim of *N.E.* as Aristotle states it, is to teach virtue "not [just] in order to know it, but in order to become good" (1103b27,28). That is, Aristotle teaches the suitable reader how to acquire virtue for himself. In this light, Book Six presents more than a brief sketch of the intellectual virtues; it presents in outline a complete psychology as it bears upon virtue. This psychology is to be understood as the ground work for any discussion or thought about the good life. It provides the framework whereby one may understand the soul of the wise or prudent person and the respective activities of each. Book Six is central to an understanding of the whole of *N.E.* because it allows the reader to rethink the account of the virtues provided so far; and to understand how reason, the role of which Aristotle has assumed to this point, relates to ethical virtue (1103b32, 33).

Aristotle begins by sub-dividing the rational part of the soul into (a) that "by which we perceive the kinds of things whose principles cannot be other than they are and (b) that by which we investigate the kinds of things whose principles may be other than they are" (1139a7-9). The first part, Aristotle calls the "scientific" part (*epistemonikon*) and the other he calls the "estimative" (*logistikon*). Ethical virtue is a concern of the estimative part of the soul because it is grounded in the world of becoming and it deals with particular actions in concrete circumstances. The best of a number of possible actions is to be chosen according to the mean, which is fixed and grounded upon principles of natural justice, and which lends a person's actions consistency in the changing world. Thus it is that the estimative part of the soul investigates the changing world and grasps the fundamental characteristics which make each situation unique. With reference to the mean, it is able to bring about consistent actions in each situation.

There are three parts of the soul which have authority (*kyria*) over action and truth: our senses, the intellect or rational intuition (*nous*) and our desires. The first of these, Aristotle argues, is not a moving principle of action because our senses are like those of other animals which do not engage in *action*. The senses are not to be entirely discounted since they provide information about the realm of change, but ultimately they do not influence the specific course of action a person pursues. The choice is made according to the agent's intellect and desires. These are the moving principles of action. Aristotle brings intellect and desire together when he states that "what affirmation and denial are to *thought*, pursuit and avoidance are to desire" (1139a20,21). What *thought* (*dianoia*) affirms, desire should naturally pursue as a fitting counterpart. This follows because ethical virtue is a habit which manifests itself in a person's soul in the form of good intentions. Intentions, however, are desires which have been focused upon a particular object through deliberation. Therefore, deliberation must be characterized by sound reasoning if the desires are to be focused upon what is good and manifest themselves in good intentions (1139a23-25). This constitutes a brief sketch of the soul which has habituated good actions. When the habits are good, deliberation is characterized by sound reasoning, and consequently the agent's desire should, and in fact does, follow what *thought* affirms. There are important details, however, which must be added to make this sketch complete.

Virtuous actions involve the agent in two kinds of rational activity. The agent must first of all form proper intentions and then deliberate concerning the best actions. However, intentions themselves involve two kinds of rational activity. The agent must a) grasp the fundamental nature of the circumstances and b) desire an object or an end which is best suited for those circumstances. The first activity is rational and is an exercise of rational intuition [*nous*]. The second activity is not rational, however, the desires have been directed in some manner toward an end which the agent believes is good. To some degree they have been focused by rational activity. This implies that the agent possesses an understanding of the world and of right action which precedes the circumstances upon which the agent deliberates. He is committed to this understanding and therefore has an idea concerning the ends which are most worthy of pursuit. This is necessary because rational intuition in itself is insufficient to formulate intentions. The second activity, that of desiring the correct objects, must be involved. With correct desires the agent's rational intuition grasps the fundamentals of the circumstances which are most relevant for his deliberations.

An example will help to clarify this. Let us assume that Josiah is an Old Order Mennonite who, because of religious beliefs, has no form of insurance on his person or property. One winter evening Josiah's barn burns down and only a small portion of his livestock is saved. Josiah's neighbour, who also owns a farm, will perceive that the most important considerations are Josiah's lack of insurance and his inability to care for his remaining livestock. These particulars come to light as the most relevant because Josiah's neighbour, although not a Mennonite, is a part of the local community and knows from experience the importance of supporting each member of that community. As a farmer he understands the loss Josiah has sustained, and wishes to help on this basis alone. Most of all, however, he understands that acting in the community allows him to be who he is, not only as a farmer, but in his capacities as a human being. Through his experience in his community he has an understanding of the world and of right conduct with respect to his neighbours. This is a view to which he is committed and thus he desires to achieve certain ends which conform to this view. His experience and *thought* about the world help him to grasp the fundamental characteristics of the situation. His desires and his *thought* are brought together to form the intention to help Josiah. His specific intentions to offer assistance at a barn raising, make a donation to a fund for new livestock, and to offer Josiah space for his remaining livestock in his own barn, are manifestations of a disposition in his soul. It is clear that "desire and reason for the sake of something" are working together to form the neighbour's intentions (1139a34). The *thought* which designates these actions as good and desirable proceeds from *thought* about neighbourly conduct in general.

However, desire and reason are necessary not only because the rational intuition must be focused by desire, but also because the desiring part of the soul does not of itself discriminate between good and bad desires. It must be focused by habit upon particular ends with the result that it automatically desires the achievement of those ends. Thus, Aristotle concludes that "intention cannot exist without intuition and *thought*, nor without ethical habit" (1139a35). Josiah's neighbour has developed such habits with respect to membership in a community and neighbourly conduct. In the formation of his intentions, the neighour's *thought* related his desires to an understanding of the world. His commitment to this understanding manifests itself in habits which are firmly established in his soul. The agent's *thought* must judge between the desires natural to a human being and the impulse which arises from a commitment to good habits. When habits are lacking, one is left only with the initial impulses of nature. This is why Aristotle states that without habit the agent merely exercises volition of will like that seen in children who have not developed habits, or in animals which are incapable of developing habits (1111b8,9). Aristotle therefore concludes:

> it is not *thought* as such that can move anything, but *thought* which is for the sake of something and is practical, for it is this that rules productive *thought* also.
> 1139a35-b1

Thought and desire work to form intention and therefore, "intention is either a desiring intellect or a *thinking* desire" (1139b5). It follows, then, that throughout the entire action one is concerned with truth, not only with respect to the *thought* which focuses desires, but with respect to the actions which follow intention. The intention must conclude in an action which reflects the truth discovered in the deliberative process. Hence, Josiah's neighbour must intend to offer help at the barn raising and then actually help.

The desire to accomplish a specific end, however, is influenced by the agent's notion of a still higher good, that is, the agent's notion of the Good for all people. His contemplation (*theoretikos dianoias*) concerning the highest good is itself either true or false, and while it does not produce anything or otherwise enter directly into the world of becoming, the possession of truth in regard to the things which do not change is as important, or even more important for the agent, as truth concerning those things which do change (1139a26,27). To be mistaken about the highest good is ultimately to be mistaken about that which should form the object of intention. Thus, if Josiah's neighbour considers profit to be a greater good than the well-being of his neighbour, he may choose not to yield space in his barn for another's livestock which could be used for his own. Knowing truth is the function of both the estimative and the scientific parts of the soul, and both bear on the ethical action (1139b13,14). It is to this problem of ascertaining the truth that Aristotle now turns his attention.

When the soul correctly affirms or denies something, it possesses truth in one of the following ways: through art (*techne*), [scientific] *knowledge* (*episteme*), prudence (*phronesis*), Wisdom (*sophia*), and intellection or intuition (*nous*) (1139b15-19). Scientific knowledge concerns objects which are necessary and thus cannot be other than they are. These are the *arche* (ultimate principles, causes, or starting points) of the changes which occur in the world around us. The *arche* generate the changes, and are therefore in some sense prior to the changes. However, because they are permanent they also account for the regularity these changes exhibit. For example, the reason why oak tree after oak tree grows from acorn to maturity is because the moving principles of the oak rule throughout the entire cycle of growth. The permanence of the principles and the consistency of the changes they render in the world allows human beings to learn about them through the observation of natural objects, such as oaks. Such learning is based upon induction which begins with a set of particulars and leads to the statement of a general principle implicit in each particular. Teaching about such principles, however, proceeds through demonstrations which are deductive or syllogistic.[1]In other words, they begin with a general principle and proceed to the particulars. Thus, induction is the more fundamental means for a person to acquire knowledge, because the general claim of the syllogism is grasped first of all through induction (1139b19-32). For example, the principle that it is the nature of deciduous plants to drop their leaves prior to winter is derived from numerous examples of that phenomenon. The principle cause is the tree's deciduous nature. This cause is prior to the particular phenomenon of a certain oak dropping its leaves, and it meets the other requirements set out in *Posterior Analytics* of being true, immediate and casual related.[2] In turn this principle can be demonstrated through syllogisms which lead to conclusions that accord with human experience. Therefore, scientific knowledge is "a disposition acquired by way of demonstration" (1139b33). It is a belief that one knows the cause upon which a specific phenomenon depends, and that the cause is the cause of this phenomenon only, and that the phenomenon known could not be otherwise.

That the fundamental means of acquiring knowledge is through induction implies that virtue is learned through induction. As we saw earlier, it is from repeated instances of similar actions that the general understanding of virtue is learned. Once it is learned, the reasoning proceeds deductively, i.e., a situation is recognized as one which calls for a specific kind of action. Rational intuition or intellection which, as we saw in the last chapter, plays a crucial role in the estimative part of the soul, also has an important part in both the scientific and estimative parts of the soul. Scientific knowledge, as we saw, is belief of universal and necessary principles [*arche*] known through demonstration. However, it is necessary that there be *arche* which are literally first principles, and which themselves cannot be demonstrated (1140b3,4). These are the most fundamental and general principles from which all change is generated. This is necessary if one is to avoid an infinite regress.[3] The faculty by which these *arche* are grasped is once again rational intuition or intellection [*nous*]. Rational intuition grasps basic definitions, the essential differences and similarities in objects, and those first principles upon which the demonstrations of science depend. For example, particular triangles can be used to show that the angles of a triangle must add up to two right angles. However, one must understand what a straight line, an angle, a degree, and numbers are, if this demonstration is to work. These are fundamental definitions upon which a demonstration may rest, and it is the intuition's understanding of them which makes the demonstration, and thus acquisition of knowledge, possible.

Knowledge may be brought to bear upon the world in two distinct forms, namely, action and production. Production, which occurs through art (*techne*), is concerned with bringing an object into being whose moving principles lie outside of itself and in the producers (1140a12,13). However, the producer is not the only moving principle, because his product is aimed at achieving a certain good. This good too is a principle, in this case the final cause, and it is prior to and higher than the producer. For example, medicines are produced so people can be restored to health. Health is the higher good, and is more important than the medicines or the art which produced the medicines (1094a10-17). The more embrassive or fundamental the cause (*arche*), the more important it is as a cause. Action, however, is distinguished from production because its moving principle, intention, lies in the agent himself. The agent intends to act in a particular way for specific ends, just as Josiah's neighbour intends to help at the barn raising and then acts on his intention. Such acts are good in themselves, for the ends of his actions are a final cause and these are achieved when he acts upon his intention. This is the importance of the voluntary nature of the agent's actions. The agent's choice involves reflection on the circumstances in which he finds himself and his actions which follow from his choices reflects his ethical character (1110a1-10,20-24).

It is for this reason that prudence is important. In an exposition which calls to mind the description of the magnanimous person, Aristotle writes:

> A prudent man is thought to be one who is able to deliberate well concerning what is good and expedient for himself, not with respect to a part, e.g., not the kinds of things which are good and useful for health or strength, but the kinds of things which are good and expedient for living well [in general].
> 1140a26-29

Prudence is the capacity for deliberation about objects which are both useful and good for one's whole life. For example, the agent may deliberate about what kind of life he is most fitted for, public or private, or about a particular action in a given set of circumstances. Deliberation is central to prudence, and because it concerns circumstances which are undetermined, prudence concerns itself with ends for which there are no established procedures (1112b7-13). Thus, Aristotle states that a person who is able to make "good judgments about things for a particular good end of which there is no art" is prudent "in some particular respect" (1140a30). However, "a particular good end" can be one which benefits others, as seen in the example of Josiah's neighbour. Thus, Aristotle broadens the definition by saying that one "who deliberates [well] might be prudent in a general way also" (1140a31). In his initial presentation of prudence, the capacity to deliberate about one's own well-being seems to entail the capacity to deliberate about ends beneficial to others. This is confirmed in Aristotle's conclusion that "prudence is a disposition with true reason and ability for *actions* concerning what is good or bad for man" (1140b5). But why does a prudent person with the capacity for good deliberation use it for the sake of others? To act for the benefit of others is a mark of ethical virtue. To understand prudence, then, one must understand how ethical virtue relates to the intellectual virtue of prudence.

The actions of a person are, as we have seen, compound in that they require both *thought* and desire. An agent's desires are naturally biased toward his own well-being, and it is this bias which gives rise to natural virtue and provides the ground for ethical virtue. It is also the case for Aristotle that there exists a natural intellectual capacity which similarly acts for the agent's well-being. Thus, Aristotle states that human beings possess a "power" in the soul called "shrewdness". This is an intellectual capacity "such as to enable us to *act* successfully upon the means leading to an aim we set before ourselves" (1144a24, 25). It works in close connection with natural virtue, and thus the action which one chooses to engage in to achieve a desired end does not arise solely because of natural virtue, but in part because of the power of shrewdness (1144a20-23). In giving a definite form to the natural virtues, then, ethical virtue also affects shrewdness. Shrewdness is the ground upon which prudence rests, for while prudence is not to be equated with shrewdness, "neither can it exist without this power" (1144a31). Ethical virtue hones and refines both the natural virtues and natural intellectual capacities by focusing the desires on the correct "starting point" (*arche*) of action (1144a20,32-36). This accords with the fact that *thought* and desire work together to form intention. Prudence, which deliberates about actions conducive to achieving a desired end, cannot develop without ethical virtue, because virtue makes the intention right and good deliberation possible (1143a21). Thus, ethical virtue provides the foundation for intellectual virtue. This is why Aristotle stated that intellectual virtue is acquired through teaching and that this requires both time and experience (1103a16). Yet ethical virtue is learned in the city through interaction with others. Thus, the ability to deliberate about one's own well-being is directed and shaped in such a way that it allows one to make good judgments about particular good ends which embrace the good of others because it is based upon ethical virtue. Ethical virtue is necessary if one is going to deliberate well.

Good deliberation is "[rightness] of *thinking*" which has not yet culminated in a conclusion or assertion, but remains in the process of investigation (1142b14-16). It is not sufficient for the reasoning to be correct only with respect to the starting point, but it must also be correct with respect to "the proper manner and the proper time [etc]" (1142b27-29). Furthermore, right reason must culminate in action because it is a characteristic of right reason that it succeeds in achieving the ends towards which it aims. (1142b29-35). Prudence is seen in successful action. Thus, one is not prudent when he perceives that a certain action is called for, say courage, but he lacks the spirit to carry out this action. Once again, good deliberation culminates in successful action in the form of ethical virtue. Ethical virtue, then, has educated the whole soul by giving form not only to the natural virtues, but by giving a definite form to the natural intellectual capacities also. With this background it is possible to see clearly why deliberation on the part of the prudent person includes the good of others in addition to his own good.

Human beings share the same nature and ultimately pursue the same good: their own happiness. However, their natures are such that their own happiness requires an appropriate disposition towards others. Human beings for the most part do not experience happiness independently, but are constituted by nature so that their own happiness comes to be in the context of a political community. Furthermore, because their education to virtue is acquired in part through the community, members share a similar experience. This is one reason why concord is so important in the city; concord is part of a shared experience. Thus, prudence is thought by most people to be "concerned most of all with matters relating to the person in whom it exists and with him only" (1141b30). However, human nature is such that it is both expedient and good for him to take the good of others into account during his deliberations.

This is the reason why temperance is of such great importance for prudence. Temperance is a virtue of the appetitive part of the soul and is related to ethical virtue. It preserves prudence by focusing one's desires upon what is truly beneficial to oneself, and this includes taking into account what is good for one's political community. Temperance not only makes the starting point of deliberation correct, but allows reason to proceed in harmony with desire:

> temperance does preserve such a belief [ie. prudence]; for it is not every kind of belief that the pleasant and painful corrupt or pervert, like the belief that the triangle has or has not two right angles, but only those concerned with objects of *action*. For the starting point of an *action* is the

> purpose of that *action*. But to him who is corrupted because of pleasure or pain, the starting point is not apparent....
>
> 1140b13-18

Temperance is prior to prudence and it is with this virtue that prudence forms a natural alliance. It is the mean with respect to pleasures of the body, and particularly with those natural pleasures which are subject to excess (1118a24-27,b16-20). It is brought about through good habits (ethical virtues) which automatically focus desires upon objects which are truly good, even if these objects require that one forgo immediate pleasures. The temperate person has no bad desires, but has habituated good actions to such an extent that he is characterized by desires which harmonize with reason (1151b32-1152a3). Temperance is a part of the highest kind of prudence and is the highest result of the cultivation of ethical virtue. It is necessary, then, that all the virtues be present in the soul if one is to be prudent, because one must focus automatically on the best ends and deliberate well with respect to the specific actions called for, whether these are courageous or generous actions. This is possible only if the agent has habituated ethical virtue. Thus, "when this one [virtue] i.e., prudence exists, all the others are present also" (1145a2). With prudence good deliberation occurs with respect to all ethical virtues, and the mean is properly defined in the given circumstances.

Thus, in prudence true reason and ability are brought together. It is the "disposition with true reason and ability for *actions* concerning human goods" (114121,22). One with a greater ability for virtue will have greater ends towards which he will direct his reason. As one who has come to be in the political community through interaction with others, the person with greater ability is able to deliberate about the good of others in addition to his own good. It is for this reason that Aristotle states that political prudence and common prudence, that is prudence exercised for one's own immediate benefit, are similar. Political prudence "is concerned with particular *actions* and deliberations, for a particular measure voted on is like an individual thing to be *acted* upon" (1141b27-29). One is therefore able to perform actions for others which are easily recognized as prudent, but also recognized as being beyond the capacity of most people. Thus, Pericles and others like him are considered prudent because their abilities were great and through right reason they performed greater actions than others could (1140b9).

It follows from this that prudence is the most architectonic virtue discussed so far. It is the virtue of the estimative part of the soul that allows a person to reason truly with respect to his own good and the good of others. Ethical virtue exists for the sake of prudence, and the aim of ethical virtue is to culminate in prudence as a disposition in the soul, that is as "*thinking* desire".

Prudence is not seen in its entirety in each virtue; what is seen is right reason in regard to that with which a particular virtue is concerned. Thus, courage is the exercise of right reason with respect to fear. Right reason is intrinsic in every virtue, and thus a virtue is a habit with right reason (1144b18-30). Furthermore, it follows that the magnanimous person is the most prudent person discussed so far. However, it is not necessary for one to have mastered ethical virtue to the same extent as the magnanimous one in order to possess prudence. A continent individual exercises prudence like the magnanimous one, however, he lacks the moral capacity of the magnanimous person because he is not temperate. He feels base desires and would thus "be pleased by *acting* contrary to reason but does not yield to such *action*" (1152a2,3). While the continent person will fix his sights on the same end as the temperate one, he will find it harder and perhaps more painful to act according to reason because of bad desires. While his happiness is therefore less complete, his judgments may very well be the same or similar to those of a temperate person.

Prudence allows one to judge the best actions in a particular situation in the same way that an archer successfully estimates the trajectory of an arrow needed to hit a distant target (cf.1141b13,1094a25). Like an archer who must compare possible trajectories, the prudent person keeps his eye on the desired end and compares possible alternatives. The capacity to judge in this way is called understanding (*synesis*) or good understanding (*eusynesia*) (1143a1). It requires not only that one be aware of the desired end, but that in making the judgment one refer to a general body of knowledge or opinion and one's own experience. Thus, understanding is not the same as either scientific knowledge or opinion, but is seen when one uses scientific knowledge to unravel a new problem, or when one uses commonly accepted opinions to judge a speaker's discussion about prudent conduct (1143a3,13,15). It is by virtue of this appeal to an accepted standard that people recognize the understanding of the prudent person's judgments. However, this implies that his judgments will often reflect the city's standards, and the city's standards are based on opinion. Hence, his prudence will also be based on opinion, and consequently his expression of ethical virtue will be based on opinion.

Prudence is based upon opinion because it is concerned with what may or may not be in the world of change, and in this regard it is very important for human beings, because the opinions held by the city are central to their lives. Prudence is the end of ethical virtue which has been acquired in the city. Through the city's education and one's own efforts, the estimative part of the soul has been taught how to investigate changing circumstances and ascertain the mean which will give rise to the best actions. However, what is understood to be "the best" is not perceived immediately by the estimative part of the soul in the same way scientific knowledge is perceived by the scientific part of the soul. To make its judgments, the estimative part of the soul assumes certain premises about the principles which do not change, and principles of this kind are comprehended by the scientific part of the soul. Hence, the prudent person lacks the certitude of scientific knowledge about the ultimate ends of his actions.[4]He has accepted the assumptions implicit in the city's laws concerning the nature of the Good. The city's laws are based upon principles of natural justice, and these change in accordance with the circumstances of the city. The laws of the city reflect a familiarity with nature which allows the city to provide a good life for its citizens. Yet the city too lacks scientific knowledge of the first principles. This betrays an implicit limitation in prudence which follows from the fact that it is a virtue of the estimative part of the soul. Knowledge of the principles which can change does not necessarily imply knowledge of those which do not.

Yet scientific knowledge itself shares a limitation with prudence. Scientific knowledge is "belief of universal and necessary things", but it is possible for belief to be mistaken. This would constitute a defect in the scientific part of the soul, and hence scientific knowledge points towards wisdom which seeks to replace belief with truth. Wisdom is "intuition and scientific knowledge of the most honorable objects", and it allows a person to "not only know what follows from the principles, but also possess the truth about the principles" (1141a18-20). Where scientific knowledge seeks to understand the principles of nature, wisdom seeks the truth about the first principles which are grasped by intuition and upon which scientific knowledge rests. These are the most architectonic principles from which all things are generated, and they are the "most honorable by their nature" (1141b3,4). From knowledge of the first principles, one can aspire to understand the order within the whole of nature and know with certainty what follows from all principles. These principles do not seek human goods and therefore knowledge of them is above prudence and politics (1141b7,8;1141a21). Nevertheless, by discovering the truth about these principles, one can understand the order of the natural realm.

It follows from this that wisdom is the fully architectonic virtue, and to possess knowledge of the first principles and base one's prudence on these is more noble than to possess prudence based upon principles which may change (ie., on opinion). Thus, the magnanimous one described so far must not be the greatest or finest human being. The greatest human being would be a magnanimous person who possesses wisdom. What emerges, then, are two forms of magnanimity, each of which by definition is concerned with noble and honorable objects. The lower kind of magnanimity is that introduced by Aristotle in Book

Four. This kind of magnanimity is political in its nature while the higher kind is less concerned with the world of becoming and more concerned with Being. Both kinds of magnanimity, however, should be examined in light of the intellectual virtues in order to understand their place in the political community.

11. The Two Forms of Magnanimity

The first kind of magnanimous person finds his completeness in the city, and strives to be the best example of a good human being. He has mastered ethical virtue as it is understood by the city and his life is confirmation of the city's opinions concerning justice and the good for human beings. He is able to make judgments about human goods in general which accord with the city's opinions; and because of his surpassing ability, he succeeds in benefitting the citizens (1142b21). He will engage in this kind of activity because benefitting others is a greater manifestation of prudence than reasoning merely for one's own benefit (1163a1). The greatness of his actions is demonstrated not only in the fact that the city recognizes and honors him for the benefits he has rendered, but also in the fact that his success will prove his ability, and his virtue will be reflected in the policies the city adopts. In the highest cases the city will become a monument of his virtue for all to see.[5]

On the surface, this would appear to reintroduce harmony between magnanimity and the city because the ethical virtues which were nurtured within the city have culminated in an intellectual virtue that casts its glance back to the city, and redounds to its good. However, prudence is concerned with the good of the person in whom it exists, and it is characteristic of intellectual virtue "that in every case [it] chooses what is best for itself" (1141b30,1169a 18). Thus, the actions of the magnanimous one are in the first instance for his own benefit and not the city's. It is most beneficial for him to live in a city which is conducive to his way of life, and such a city would be one where there are laws which encourage ethical virtue and, most importantly, where there are others like himself. In the previous chapter it was shown that the magnanimous one will perform acts of great honor to inspire others to be like himself, because helping others toward virtue is the most noble benefit one can render to other people. His reasons for acquiring honor are now augmented by the practical truth that it is easier and more pleasant to live with others like himself. The greatest and the most practical actions to this end correspond to the most noble kind of prudence. He:

> would do best by becoming a lawgiver, for public cares are clearly administered by laws, and they are administered well by good laws.
> 1180a34-b1

Law-giving is an exercise of the most noble and architectonic form of prudence. It is architectonic because the legislator aims at the happiness of all those who will live under his laws. He must therefore have a view of the human good as such towards which the laws of the city aim. This view will define the character of the laws and the order into which the parts of the community are placed (1094b1-3). Thus, his opinions about the principles which do not change manifest themselves in the city's laws. In a sense, his activity will resemble the exercise of wisdom, because the laws and the resulting order within the city are ultimately understood in light of the legislator's view of the good for human beings (cf.1094ba19-b1). However, his legislation is not for the whole of human kind, and thus his understanding of the good for human beings as such is secondary to that of the city for which he legislates. He is limited by his immediate concern. His activity is "an expression issuing from a sort of prudence and intellect [*nous*]" (1180a22). His laws must be prudent and reflect the principles of natural justice in particular circumstances. As we saw previously, this will involve the mixture of the natural and conventional. Thus, "laws are like works of political art" wherein the legislator seeks to blend his view of the human good as such with principles of natural justice and human nature in order to achieve the best city possible in the given circumstances (1181b1). The skillfulness of the legislator will be seen in the degree to which he can make the natural and the conventional indistinguishable, like the person who has trained himself to be ambidextrous despite one arm being naturally stronger than the other (1134b25-35). This is the most honorable form of prudence, and the most beneficial action in which the magnanimous one could engage.

However, opportunities for this are rare, and for the most part, a magnanimous person will choose to exercise political prudence within the existing framework of law. Again, the ability seen in political prudence is easily recognized because common prudence is a similar disposition. For the magnanimous one to have an opportunity to live with others with dispositions similar to his own, it is most practical for him to perform great acts of political prudence and inspire others to imitate him. To this end the magnanimous person will look toward strategy, economics and rhetoric, the most honored faculties in the city (1094b3). Traditionally, special honors are accorded to leaders who bring reputation and security to their cities by planning and executing military campaigns; indeed, history attests to their greatness for generations to come. Their acts stand as achievements to be imitated by all who would be magnanimous. In this light, Aristotle's reference to Pericles in connection with prudence is significant (1140b8). Pericles led Athens to its greatest heights by transforming the Delian League into an empire, and when this led to war with Sparta, he proposed the most prudent policies. In fact, he was so highly regarded in Athens that the city, which was ostensibly a democracy was actually under one man rule during the time of Pericles. Through the force of his rhetoric all power was said to rest in his hands.[6]When the war with Sparta was the most threatening, Pericles rose to the occasion with near flawless effort. This is an example of a magnanimous man performing the deeds for which he is most suited. When no other person is able to judge rightly what is best for the city and keep it on the best course, the magnanimous man will prove his ability. Actions such as these bring together the manifest nobility of distinction in war with outstanding political prudence, and a great-souled man will show that only he is able to do this. (Perhaps a more modern example of the same kind of courage and political prudence is found in the person of Winston Churchill.)

Reflecting on the success of Pericles again brings to light the problem of the magnanimous one's self-sufficiency. It was noted earlier that the very character of ethical virtue compromised self-sufficiency because it depended upon others for its expression. However, it must also be noted that Pericles was successful because he lived in a city of considerable size and strength which was, moreover, strategically located. As Aristotle states, there is an element of good luck in magnanimity of this kind, for Pericles was born in a place where he received a worthy education, and at a time when he could exercise his capacity to its fullest (1124a22). His example shows that the political expression of surpassing ethical virtue depends to some extent upon chance. And this is important, for if it is rare that one will develop the outstanding virtue required for magnanimity, it is rarer still that this virtue will be cultivated at a time and in circumstances wherein it can be manifest to the fullest. Ethical virtue not only depends upon others, but is influenced by the circumstances of the city wherein it is cultivated. Thus, magnanimity of Pericles' sort is not truly self-sufficient, either with respect to its basis (which remains opinion about first principles), or with respect to its exercise.

The higher kind of magnanimous person, however, stands in contrast to the first kind because he is less dependent upon the city for his virtue. The highest kind of intellectual virtue, wisdom, focuses upon objects which are above politics and prudence, and consequently the activity of contemplation relies less on the city than the activities of the first kind of magnanimity. The contemplative does not have to look to the city in order to engage in the pursuit of wisdom. This necessarily raises the important question of the extent to which the higher kind of magnanimous person must exercise ethical virtue in the pursuit of wisdom and, after having acquired wisdom, the extent to which it is necessary he continue practicing ethical virtue. We have seen that ethical virtue is necessary for the development of prudence, however, prudence is concerned with the world of change while wisdom is concerned with first principles which are constant. It is the virtue of the scientific part of the soul. The question which emerges, then, concerns the relationship between virtue of the estimative part of the soul and the virtue of the scientific part of the soul.

The capacities of the scientific part of the soul are developed by the acquisition of scientific knowledge through demonstrations. With these demonstrations the agent acquires scientific knowledge about the principles or causes which generate the change in the world around him. However, in the same way ethical virtue is perfected through action in a variety of situations, the intellectual virtues of the scientific part of the soul are perfected by demonstrations of scientific knowledge and by the exercise of understanding (*synesis*) in the resolution of scientific problems (1143a 13). In this way the capacities of the scientific part of the soul are cultivated and the agent learns to focus upon the principles which generate changes. These capacities will naturally vary from person to person, some being able to grasp scientific principles with less effort and with greater clarity than others.

This is important in light of Aristotle's definition of wisdom as scientific knowledge and intuition of the first principles. The first principles are the most fundamental and architectonic of all principles. Wisdom aspires to the acquisition of truth about the entire natural order insofar as it strives to understand the first principles and knowledge of what follows from them (1141a24-30). This requires more than the capacity to grasp the necessary and eternal truths of scientific knowledge. Wisdom seems to require a kind of intellectual greatness or magnanimity which is like the greatness of soul necessary for the first kind of magnanimous person. One who succeeds in grasping the first principles has demonstrated greatness far beyond the capacity of those who grasp mere scientific knowledge. Moreover, the first principles generate both the principles of scientific knowledge and the principles with which prudence is concerned. Wisdom is not an understanding of abstract principles in the hypothetical sense that mathematicians understand them, but it is knowledge of first principles which has been acquired through experience in the same way as prudence (1142a15-21). At its highest level, wisdom is both the practical and theoretical knowledge of nature (whenever this is possible). Thus, a wise person is not like one who knows light meats are healthy, but is ignorant of what kind of meats are light. Wisdom requires both time and experience and a developed capacity for ethical virtue because it is part of the whole with which wisdom is concerned. Ethical virtue yields practical wisdom about the changing world, and it is the means whereby human beings grow in political society. Furthermore, ethical virtue provides experience and knowledge of one's soul, and this is an integral part of wisdom itself. A wise person, then, cares about ethical virtue; however, his attachment to it will be tempered by the fact that he possesses intellectual magnanimity in addition to the capacity for ethical virtue. He will desire the exercise and growth of his intellectual virtues more than the complete development of his capacity for ethical virtue.

The reason for this desire arises from the nature of the wise person's soul and his enjoyment of the contemplative activity. Aristotle tells us that each activity following from the capacities of a mature soul is perfected by a unique pleasure (1174b24,25). The object of both intellectual and ethical virtue is to make sure that each "faculty is at its best and its capacity is directed towards the best" (1174b28,29). The pleasures of fully developed faculties engaged in the highest activities of which they are capable is naturally greater than that of less developed capacities or less noble activities. However, because different activities are perfected by different pleasures, there is a different pleasure for *thought* and for action (1175a15-29). The pleasures which are part of the activity of contemplation are greater than those of ethical virtue, and a human soul naturally desires most to engage in the activities it enjoys the most (1177a25,26). In other words, the greatest loves in a person's soul lead him to engage in particular activities to the exclusion of those which are less desired (1175b3-7). Those who desire to acquire wisdom are those whose souls are such that contemplation is the most pleasurable activity- even more pleasurable than the highest achievement in the ethical virtues. The reason why contemplation is more pleasing than ethical virtue is that the first principles which are the objects of contemplation are above prudence and politics. Ethical virtue is not required to the fullest degree for an understanding of the first principles, it is required only to the extent that practical wisdom is acquired for the sake of contemplation. Contemplation is a higher good and therefore the development of one's intellectual capacities is more desirable than the development of ethical virtue.

Contemplation is a solitary activity which requires neither the interaction with others nor external goods to the same degree as the activities of the first kind of magnanimity. Moreover, the wiser a person is, the greater his knowledge of the first principles which are self sufficient, and the more he is able to contemplate by himself (1177a33,34). The contemplative will therefore be less inclined to refine the ethical virtues to the same degree as the first kind of magnanimous one. However, this will not make him less virtuous, nor will it lead him to neglect the exercise of ethical virtue. Prudence exists for the sake of wisdom, and while it is not the case that it must be cultivated to its fullest extent in order to achieve wisdom, it is necessary for the acquisition of wisdom. Prudence itself is regulated by a mean or mid-point at which it serves to make the contemplative both well-disposed to pursue wisdom in the context of political society and to contemplate first principles (1106a15-20,1138b21-25,1145a7-9). Prudence is not an end in itself, and for the second kind of magnanimous person the attachment to it is less than that of the first kind. The second kind does not find his greatest pleasure in political activity.

The end of political activity is the happiness of others or the acquisition of those goods which contribute to that happiness- the activity is not an end in itself (1177b 7-15). Contemplation is more complete than political activity because it is an end in itself. Accordingly, the second and more complete kind of magnanimous person does not consider actions of great political prudence as the highest good. Instead, he considers politics to be "toilsome", and political power and wealth as impediments to the acquisition of wisdom (1178b4,5). These are curious traits for someone with such great capacity, and the coincidence of greatness of soul and a reluctance to display great ethical virtue will make one appear strange within the city (1179a14-16). However, the second kind of magnanimous person deliberately stands at a greater distance from the political community and wishes to engage in politics only to the extent that the city requires it (1178b34,35). He perceives that the principles upon which prudence rests are limited to immediate circumstances and that they are ultimately based upon opinion- which by definition may not be true -unless that is, one also possesses knowledge of the first principles. Thus, his life will be ordered for the sake of contemplation. The scientific part of his soul rules the estimative part, and prudence "gives orders for the sake of wisdom" (1145a9). Therefore, his actions are both different and more noble than those of the first kind of magnanimous person because his desires and intentions are harmonized with the highest excellence of the soul.

This is not the case for the first kind of magnanimous person because the scientific part of his soul is not focused upon the first principles. His *thought* concerns the realm of change, and when he does contemplate, he contemplates about virtuous actions, not first principles (1169b30-1170a4). His ethical vision is circumscribed by the estimative part of his soul because the scientific part of his soul is used for the sake of the estimative. Hence, he does not perceive the most noble things to be ends in themselves. His point of view is like that of most other prudent people. The most noble truths do not have immediate practical implications for human beings and do not clearly point to human goods. Therefore, those who are merely prudent perceive the truly wise person, preoccupied as he is with transpolitical concerns, as impractical and inexperienced (1141b3-7,15-23).[7]The love for ethical virtue which motivates the first kind of magnanimous person supports this perception. The essential difference between the higher and the lower forms of magnanimity arises from the fact that each has a distinct nature; one loves the pleasures of the political life to the exclusion of the soul's highest capacities while the other finds his completion in those very capacities. The actions which follow from the desire to exercise only the highest capacities of the rational soul appear superfluous in the eyes of the first or lower kind of magnanimous person. He considers his own way of life the most noble and the most complete; and when he engages in actions of great political prudence, he is convinced that his actions are the best.

This allows one to see why the first kind of magnanimous person chooses a life of public honors instead of a life of the highest virtue. He is disposed such that he not only loves acts of ethical virtue as ends in themselves, but also the honor of having others model their lives after his own, and that derived from the city when it publicly recognizes his worth. His attachment is to the political society of which he is the best citizen. This returns us to the consideration of the sense in which the lower kind of magnanimous person appears to be divine in comparison to most people (1145a17-29). The term "divine man" is used when "admiration for a man is exceptionally high," and admiration is like honor. It is possible that the lower kind of magnanimous person chooses public honors because he loves them to excess, as Alcibiades confesses in the *Symposium*.[8] Like Alcibiades as he is seen in the *Symposium*, the first kind of magnanimous person can see the goodness of the philosopher's life, yet he chooses public honors because his attachment is not to the pleasures of understanding the first principles, but to the pleasures of having others honor him. This accounts for the lower kind of magnanimous person's ambition to be the best. Aristotle tells us that ambition is a term which is relative to circumstances; it is some times used to praise one for his great ability for noble deeds, but also as a criticism for one whose deeds are ignoble or who oversteps his capacity (1125b9-14). The first kind of magnanimous person has the capacity for noble deeds and loves to demonstrate this capacity. It is the case, however, that honor, victory and other such goods are not strictly necessary for life, yet they are pleasant and good in themselves, and are therefore naturally worthy of choice (1147b25-30,1148a25). Those who exceed in a desire for an object which is choice-worthy by nature do not display an "evil habit" or incontinence. Aristotle concludes instead that they possess right reason in all but this one respect (1148a2-6,b30-35). Thus, the first kind of magnanimous person appears to be in error insofar as he has an excessive love of a good which is choice-worthy in itself, but is not the highest good. It is this attachment which binds the first kind of magnanimous person so closely to the city.

Yet the second kind of magnanimous person is not entirely independent of the city because he is human, and therefore "not self-sufficient for contemplation" (1178b35). He must be healthy and possess some material goods, and he will have civic obligations to fulfill. Despite his wish to remain above politics, involvement in the city is necessary, not only because of the practical needs of both the body and the city which impose themselves by nature upon human beings, but because the city is the place where virtue is cultivated, and it provides the only context for a person's growth as a human being. If the laws are ill-constituted and the city's customs degenerate, the kind of people the city nurtures will be less virtuous and less able to distinguish the noble from the base. Such people will be less appreciative of the contemplative and may be inclined to hold him in contempt for his aloofness from the city. Thus, the second kind of magnanimous person must care for the laws and customs in the city and encourage the city to educate its citizens to recognize an appropriate standard of justice.

The second kind of magnanimous person will strike a balance with respect to his involvement in the city. He will care for the laws enough to dispel the notion that he is aloof or that he has something to hide. Yet he will also grant himself the distance he needs from the city in order to engage in contemplation. In other words, he will find a mean. Like the first kind, the second kind of magnanimous one will be ironic in his dealings with other citizens. He possesses knowledge of the highest architectonic principles and these are sufficient to call into question the city's opinions concerning justice. However, calling the laws into question is not caring for them properly, and it may be positively dangerous. His understanding of justice is grounded upon the knowledge of the highest architectonic principles, and others cannot equal this because they do not have such knowledge; instead, they assume the opinions of the city. Yet the second kind of magnanimous person, pursuing wisdom most of all, cares about truth in all things great and small (1127b6,7). Thus, he must care for the laws as opinions which are salutary insofar as they make the citizens good, promote ethical virtue, and contribute to the strengthening and preservation of the context wherein he can engage in contemplation. Yet he must do this without compromising the truth, and it would be untruthful if his actions and speech were to conflict with his commitment to contemplation as the highest good. Therefore, he will "understate the truth" (including the truth about his own virtue), for the sake of those who cannot be his equal in virtue (1127b8). His irony will be complete in that he will not diminish the virtue of other citizens by his own actions or by the truth about the customs which others presume to be true, and upon which their actions are based. He will speak ironically to the majority of people and thereby permit himself openness, and avoid being too obviously aloof from the city and its citizens.

However, involvement in the city can become difficult and dangerous for both kinds of magnanimous people no matter how carefully they act. This is especially true when a magnanimous person is asked to perform an unjust act in a corrupt regime, as Athens was under the Thirty Tyrants.[9] Socrates' actions in defense of the ten generals after the battle of Arginusae, or his inaction with respect to Leon of Salamis provide excellent examples. By arguing with the Assembly and voting against it, and in failing to act as ordered by the tyrants, Socrates risked death; but he would rather have faced death for virtuous actions than live knowing that he had compromised the virtue he loved more than anything else (*Apology* 32b,c). Actions such as these are ends in themselves because the magnanimous person is just without qualification, and to uphold justice is to uphold the entirety of virtue as it is manifested in his life. To compromise this virtue would be painful to such a degree that it would strip all meaning from life. Under certain circumstances, writes Aristotle, the magnanimous person considers life unworthy (1124b7). If it is not possible for him to act in a manner consistent with his capacity for and love of virtue, that which makes life worthy, virtuous actions, is taken away. Thus, for both kinds of magnanimous people a short life of uncompromised virtue would be more pleasing than a long life of diminished virtue (1169a23,24).

This highlights the limitation placed upon the highest virtues by the needs of the body and the soul's capacity to concern itself with both the practical and the eternal. The singular focus of a human being -whose nature is composite- upon the goods of the soul accentuates the tension between the needs of the body and those of the soul. The problem is similar for both kinds of magnanimous people. The virtue of the first kind can be manifest most easily in a city which is his equal in justice and which honors what he honors. This, we noted, is impossible because the majority of citizens are ordinary people who care most for the lower goods. Thus, his virtue is compromised in that he must act virtuously within a city that has laws and follows policies which aim at pleasing this majority of citizens. The second kind of magnanimous person desires to be at a greater distance from the city, but he is not self-sufficient for contemplation. In both cases the body's needs make it impossible to extricate themselves entirely from the city. Neither is able to ignore the body's needs, but each must subordinate those needs to the needs of the soul. The benefit of the soul is the highest good, and thus its perfection is pleasing to the agent. Each kind of magnanimous person measures his actions in the city by a different standard than the majority. Their actions are for the sake of his soul's benefit, and the pleasures which they desire most are different. However, the actions which are beneficial to the soul may be painful for the body. This is no deterrent to a virtuous person and least of all to either kind of magnanimous person. For them, actions are always the most "pleasant or painless, or the least painful" in the circumstances (1120a27). The cultivation of the higher goods has not necessarily made life easier for the magnanimous person because the higher goods are continually in tension with the lower goods in the city, yet it is the life they most desire.

For the first kind of magnanimity, the excessive love of honor brings about a measure of reconciliation between virtue and the city. Yet where an excess love of honor helps to reconcile the first, the second kind appears to display an excessive desire for the goods of the soul to the exclusion of the actions which may bring him honor in the city. The desire for only the highest goods creates further tension. Yet it is the function of virtue to make one capable of living the best life in all but the most extreme circumstances. There must therefore be some further reconciliation between the noble and the base desires and between the highest goods for the soul and the practical needs of the body.

111. Magnanimity and Friendship

To be sure, a magnanimous person who gives up such goods, and especially his life, for the city or for virtue, is motivated to some degree by the desire for honor, because he knows that his actions will be recognized and honored by other virtuous people as actions to be emulated. This implies that a relationship exists between virtuous people themselves which does not exist between virtuous people and the city as a whole. It is in this context that Aristotle's treatment of friendship is crucial. The importance of friendship has been implied nearly from the beginning. Aristotle tells us that virtuous people who are most concerned with virtuous actions "seem to pursue honor in order to assure themselves that they are good" (1095b30). This implies that their virtue is more important to them than the honor which confirms it. However, Aristotle goes on to argue that such people desire to be honored especially "(a) by men of prudence, and (b) among those who know them, and (c) on the basis of their virtue" (1095b28-30). These three qualifications imply that honor is most meaningful for virtuous people when it comes from virtuous friends. Their virtuous actions appear to be for the sake of friendship.

Friendship between virtuous people involves affections which are similar to honor because when one person likes another, he sees in that person qualities which he may or may not possess, but which he admires, and admiration is like honor. This admiration goes beyond particular qualities such as wittiness, which may be appreciated by another because of the pleasure they bring. His disposition leads him to be well disposed toward his friends because of the people they are, and not by virtue of an attribute (1156b11-13). For the one who is liked for this reason, such affections are confirmation of his goodness and are very much like honor. Thus, "being liked by someone is thought to be close to being honored by him" (1159a15,16). Yet it is not the admired qualities which are liked for their own sake, but the person who possesses these qualities. Hence, "it would seem that being liked is better than being honored and that friendship is chosen for its own sake" (1159a26, 27). Friendship is good in itself, and this means that the affections and actions of which it is comprised are both good and pleasing. This is because the disposition possessed by the other person is similar and:

> that which is just pleases a man who likes what is just, and in general, virtuous things please a man who likes things done according to virtue
> 1099a10-13

and again:

> a man's own *actions* and the actions which are similar to them are pleasant to himself, and the *actions* of good men are the same or similar
> 1156b16-18

Virtuous people take pleasure in the company of others who are similar and engage in similar actions. Where they have different strengths and weaknesses they become patterns for each other and take pleasure in improving themselves

(1155a15-16,1172a11-14). Their admiration being like honor, it acts as a cause for their desire to live more virtuously.

This stands in sharp contrast to friendship between ordinary people. Practically by definition ordinary people do not take pleasure in virtuous actions but understand the pleasures of the body to be the highest good. They act in accordance with the lower part of the soul, and their actions aim at their own pleasure and comfort or the pleasure and comfort of that which immediately contributes to their satisfaction, for example, their family. Hence, when ordinary people become friends with each other it is not the person that is liked, but the quality in that person which he finds pleasurable or is useful:

> he who likes another for the sake of usefulness or of pleasure does so, respectively, for the sake of what is good or pleasurable for himself, and so he likes another not for what the latter is but insofar as the latter is useful or can give pleasure to him
> 1156a15-18

Friendship between ordinary people is utilitarian or based on pleasures. By their nature these friendships are unstable because when the times change and the use or desired pleasure which bonded the friends changes, the friendship is dissolved (1156a23,24;1157a10-15).

Friendship between virtuous people, however, approaches what Aristotle calls "perfect" or "complete friendship" (*telia philia*). It involves the reciprocated good will of two people who wish for each other the Good, or happiness, as they have experienced it; "for insofar as they are good, it is in a similar manner that they wish each other's goods" (1156b8-10). Each person is good because he possesses a prudent disposition and is able to perceive what is good for living well in general. There exists, then, a natural harmony between them. Each wishes the other to possess a disposition similar to his own. With a prudent disposition the sensing and thinking faculties in each have grown to maturity and function at the highest level in accordance with the practical concerns of prudence. Each faculty is able to perform its function well and focuses automatically on those objects which are both noble and beneficial for living well in the changing world (1174b15-26). This allows one to see in others a disposition that resembles his own, because one with a similar disposition will honor similar things and be benefitted by similar things. Hence, they encourage each other in virtue, and the more virtuous they are the better they will be in themselves and the more they will wish the good for each other (1156b13,14). Each person sees in the other a person who has the capacity to be like himself. Consequently each friend will see in the other another self, and the actions in friendship will be similar to loving oneself (1166a32,33,b1).

The prudent disposition characterized by ethical virtue, then, corresponds to the disposition shared by friends of the highest kind. It is for this reason that the prudent person desires to live with others like himself. With prudence, *thinking* desire leads one to pursue only what is good, and the most practical actions with respect to the desired good are discovered through deliberation. This renders the activity of the whole soul pleasant to the agent, and thus he is ultimately pleased with himself (1166a20-27). Furthermore, the actions which strengthen and preserve this disposition are loved for themselves and this in turn leads to a love of one's whole life (1170a26-b5). Existence, writes Aristotle, "is to all a thing [people] choose and love, and we exist by being in activity" (1168a6). However, existing in a virtuous manner is more satisfying than mere existence, and virtuous people love virtuous acts for themselves and regard them in a manner similar to the regard artists and poets have for their own work (1167b35-a3). The poet loves his work because it brings into being that which exists only potentially in his soul (1168a9,10). The same is true of the virtuous person with respect to his actions; he will desire to bring into being that which is noble and good because this capacity lies within his soul. Thus, friendship based upon ethical virtue is natural between people with such dispositions. Through friendship, they will perform the actions which are most important to them and from which they benefit. And they will be able to benefit each other continuously without loss, for both virtue and knowledge can be shared without loss (1099b17-19). When one helps another to be more generous, he does not thereby lose his capacity for generosity; and the case is similar with knowledge. Hence, their actions will harmonize with what each desires and with what is good in general. Ethical virtue has perfected the fundamental capacities of their souls and accentuated those qualities which make them good human beings. Thus, the highest achievement in ethical virtue corresponds with the highest form of friendship.

The most important consequence of this is that the virtuous people within the city constitute a natural community among themselves. Concord, Aristotle writes, "exists in *good* men, for these have the same thoughts in themselves as well as in relation to one another, having the same things in mind" (1167b5,6;cf.1156a31). Although they live in a city where the laws must bring about concord by force, it comes naturally to virtuous people. Among the virtuous, "when men are friends, they have no need of justice at all" (1155a27). The good for each of them is similar and therefore they are fair and virtuous toward each other. For the virtuous, good people and friends are the same thing (1156a31). Friendship, then, is necessary for human happiness, and if human happiness is self-sufficient, friendship and self-sufficiency are in some manner consistent with one another:

> By `self-sufficient' we do not mean an individual who leads a solitary life,

> but one with parents and children and a
> wife, and in general, with friends and
> fellow-citizens as well, since man is
> by nature political
> 1097b7-11

Self-sufficiency of this kind is the cultivation of a disposition which allows one to meet the changes which occur in one's life, both good and bad, with equanimity. The cultivation of virtue, as we have seen, gives one this ability, "for in none of man's actions is there so much certainty as in his virtuous actions" (1100b14). Virtue imparts to one's soul a kind of solidity because the agent will always act according to virtue and never perform a bad act. Hence, "a truly good and sensible man will bear all fortunes of life with propriety and will always *act* most nobly under whatever the given circumstances may be" (1101a1,2). Friends who wish for each other the good as they themselves experience it wish for each other this kind of self-sufficiency, and in encouraging a friend to live virtuously they aim at bringing about this kind of self-sufficiency.[10]

This species of self-sufficiency does not contradict the description of friendship above, but in fact reinforces it. Friends who encourage self-sufficiency through virtue in each other encourage each other to be the best human beings possible, and this focuses their attention upon and increases their capacity for each to act virtuously toward their friends and others. Not even the higher kind of magnanimous person leads an absolutely solitary existence.

He lives a life consistent with the political nature of a human being. The details of this will be made clear momentarily. For now let it be said that the actions of both kinds of magnanimous people are directed primarily to the benefit of the community of virtuous people, and especially toward those who may possess the capacity to become great in virtue. Neither kind of magnanimous person will expect to benefit ordinary people to any great extent, just as lectures on politics do not benefit young people as much as those with more experience (1095a1-9).

However, since each kind of magnanimous person has perfected virtue in a different manner, they will wish to render different goods to their friends. The first kind of magnanimous person will attract the attention of those with the greatest capacity through the self-sufficiency of his disposition and his great acts. In his life they will perceive one who needs no confirmation from others with respect to his goodness, and his example will cultivate in them a desire to be like him. Thus, they will honor him and perceive ethical virtue as an end in itself. In turn this will solidify their friendship with each other for "whatever each man regards existence to be or whatever he chooses to live for, this is what he wishes to engage in with his friends" (1172a2-4). They will hold the love of ethical virtue in common and the natural concord characteristic of the highest kind of friendship will exist between the magnanimous one and his friends. Similarly, the second kind of magnanimous person will wish to benefit the best in the city; however, his efforts will concentrate on turning their attention to the first principles. This must involve encouraging these people to look beyond the city and beyond political activity as the expression of the highest virtue. However, it is important to recall that the contemplative is motivated by a love for the activity of contemplation, and his life will appeal only to those people whose natures are like his- that is, those who are capable and otherwise suited for contemplation. Such people do not display the same love for ethical virtue as those with whom the first kind of magnanimous one becomes friends. Thus, the contemplative will not necessarily make this appeal to the same people as the first kind of magnanimity, although some exceptions to this are bound to occur. Each kind of person appeals to others with a disposition which is similar, or potentially similar, to his own. Where the first kind of magnanimous one becomes friends with those potentially his equals in ethical virtue, the latter becomes friends with those who act out of a desire to understand the truth about the first principles and have the capacity to love contemplation. With the two forms of magnanimity there appear to be two forms of friendship, each flowing out of their unique nature and different loves.

Friendship is complicated for the second kind of magnanimous person by the fact that he is differentiated from the first by an intellectual magnanimity, or greatness of intellectual capacity. Intellectual magnanimity is very rare, and while it appears necessary if one is to grasp the first principles in their fullness, it does not follow that it is required if one is to possess the desire for the acquisition of truth about the first principles. Intellectual magnanimity is a quality of the scientific part of the soul, but love for the truth arises from the nature of the agent himself. Thus, the magnanimous one will become friends with others like himself insofar as they desire to possess the truth about the first principles. As one who is capable of grasping the truth about first principles in its fullness, their friendship with him will be beneficial for them, but in a way which they will not be able to reciprocate. Such friendship will naturally center around philosophic dialogue because the second kind of magnanimous person is more capable of understanding the first principles in their fullness and rendering aid to those who desire to know the truth. In the same way the friends of the first kind of magnanimous person wish to be like him, the friends of the second kind will honor him and wish to develop their capacities to the extent to which he has developed them. While this will be a reward for him, the greatest reward of such friendship will be in the knowledge that he has rendered the highest possible good to them by his friendship.

It is through philosophic dialogue that the second kind of magnanimous person will benefit his friends. Philosophic dialogue is a natural complement to the life of the contemplative, because in dialogue the contemplative not only discovers the soul of another with a similar disposition, he also exercises the same rational faculties which allow him to engage in contemplation. Philosophic dialogue is an activity similar to contemplation itself, and therefore it is also pleasurable to the second kind of magnanimous person and his friends. As we saw earlier, souls tend by nature to enjoy certain kinds of actions more than others, and the contemplative loves the activity of the highest intellectual faculties. Dialogue is pleasurable because it is an activity which can exercise the highest part of the soul. The ordering of one's thoughts concerning the principles perceived by the intellect can both provide self-clarification and facilitate oneself in understanding related principles and others in perceiving the principles which form the subject of the dialogue. Yet this does not compromise the self-sufficiency of the higher magnanimity. While ethical virtue requires others towards whom one can be virtuous, first principles are above the world of change and are perceived only through the intellect. The discovery of truth about first principles does not rely on interaction with others but on the activity of the intellect. It is the intellect which grasps the principles and ultimately generates the dialogue. Therefore, the act of contemplation is self-sufficient and dialogue about first principles is a pleasurable activity for the second kind of magnanimous person and his friends.

The question remains, however, about the kind of friendship that can exist between the higher and lower kinds of magnanimity. Their friendship seems natural because those with the greatest capacity for virtue are disposed to become friends in the highest sense. Concord exists naturally between them, and that their souls dispose them to enjoy different kinds of actions does not inhibit them from seeing the good in each other's chosen way of life. Accordingly, the first kind of magnanimity is able to see the good in the higher kind of life. Yet it is clear that the higher and lower forms of magnanimity are the perfections of people with two different kinds of natures, and their friendship will reflect this natural difference. This will provide the basis for friendly dialogue, and both will benefit from such dialogue, albeit for different reasons.

The mutually beneficial nature of the friendship will arise from the fact that each will encourage the other to excel in the activity which he is naturally disposed to love the most. In dialogue, the second kind of magnanimous person can demonstrate the salutary effect of the philosophic life for the city through demonstration of the first principles, particularly those principles which apply to human beings. He will demonstrate the advantages of his life for the city because his knowledge of the first principles encompasses knowledge of the Good for human beings. Where the law-giver presumed knowledge of the comprehensive Good for human beings, the higher kind of magnanimous one actually possesses such knowledge, and thereby has an understanding of the best regime. Consequently, he is more able to engage in this highest form of prudence than even the first kind of magnanimous person. However, he will wish to keep himself at a greater distance from the city because he considers politics to be toilsome. Thus, the friendship between the higher and lower forms of magnanimity may culminate in a relationship which is beneficial to both, and to the entire city. Both people are able to engage in that activity through which their natures are perfected and through which they become happiest. The higher magnanimous person may contemplate the first principles applicable to political life and then enjoy dialogue about political things with the first kind of magnanimous person. The latter, who loves honor and the exercise of ethical virtue, may act in the public eye to benefit the city. The friendship between the higher and the lower kind of magnanimous people allows one to perceive clearly the essential differences between the two in terms of both the loves which move them and their different capacities.

The intellectual capacity of the second kind allows him to perceive the first principles in their completeness and perfection. Contemplation, then, is the perfect activity wherein the completeness of the first principles and their self-sufficiency is grasped by the highest part of the soul. This activity is more truly self-sufficient than any other human activity because the contemplative transcends the city and all its change. His disposition is not sustained through virtuous actions towards others, but is preserved through the solitary activity of contemplation (1177a23-27). He does not require the community for the performance of the greatest deeds. While his civic duties impose some limits, he can enjoy contemplation at almost any time. Most importantly, the higher kind of magnanimous person can engage in theoretical activity more continuously than any other activity (1177a22-23). The contemplative does not have to await an opportunity to distinguish himself from others. His self-sufficiency lessens the impact of the limitations imposed by his interaction with the city. Thus, we begin to see a measure of reconciliation between the high and the low, particularly in the case of the corrupt regime noted above. The dependence of the first kind of magnanimous person on the city for the expression of his virtue may lead him to act in a forward and dangerous manner. His only alternative is to forego the exercise of his virtue in any public way, and lead a private life and teach others privately. This, however, is the life which the contemplative leads at all times. The virtue of his soul is manifest in a private life which extricates him to a greater degree from the vicissitudes of the city. Thus, in a corrupt regime he is less pressed by circumstance, although the example of Socrates, whose way of life actually provoked the wrath of the Athenian people, shows that he may still face dangers.[11] His perfection of the intellectual virtues in wisdom will to a significant degree, although not completely, place him above the city. His life will not center around great acts, but contemplation and dialogue.

The happiness which the contemplative experiences, then, is a "complete" or "perfect happiness" (*telia eudaimon*, 1178a14). The highest part of his soul is focused on the first principles of being, and hence his activity most closely resembles that of the gods; it is a divine activity (1178b7-22). It is supposed that the gods do not experience base desires and have a nature similar to that of the temperate person. Their desire is harmonized with their *thought*. However, their *thought* would be concerned with the most noble principles of Being. They would not be concerned with producing goods through arts; nor about how to act in changing circumstances, as would the prudent person. By their very nature they would be focused upon that which the highest kind of magnanimous person desires to know most of all. To the extent that his life is characterized by contemplation, the activity in which he engages resembles the activity most fittingly attributed to the gods.

Aristotle juxtaposes the divine and the human to show that the human happiness experienced by the first kind of magnanimous person is precisely that: human happiness (1178a22). The two kinds of magnanimous people ultimately compare to each other as we might imagine a god compares to a human being. Where the first kind of magnanimous person looks to the world of change and performs actions which are noble in themselves, the higher kind is most pleased with contemplation. His is the most noble activity, and because of the permanence of these principles, he is provided with permanent objects of contemplation (1177a20-23). The very impermanence of the world of becoming, on the other hand, implies that the lower kind of magnanimous person must continually act for the sake of virtue. He is happy in a secondary kind of way (1178a9).

The difference between the higher and the lower forms of magnanimity, then, points to a tension between the divine and the human. This appears not only in the difference between the two forms of magnanimity, but within the nature of the second kind of magnanimous person himself. The higher kind of magnanimous person is incapable of being like a god in all its fullness. His nature remains in an important sense political; he too has a body whose needs intrude and whose existence is limited. At best his divine likeness is imperfect because "while the entire life of the gods is blessed, the life of men exists in a sort of likeness of such [blessed] activity" (1168b27,28).

Ultimately, the contemplative's is an elevated human existence. However, the tension between the divine and the human in the nature of the highest kind of magnanimity is a sword with two edges. The tension seems to bring some reconciliation between the divine and human in that his actions provide the divine with a human visage. He understands divine things, and because of his human nature he is able to express them in a human manner through friendships of the highest kind centered around philosophic dialogue; and such friendship will be particularly fulfilling between the two kinds of magnanimous people. Yet there is a sense in which his nature is divine and he desires the contemplative life more than involvement in politics (1177b27-30). Is the capacity to fully grasp first principles divine? In what sense is his soul divine and how does this bear on the tension between the divine and the human?

The question of the divine in human nature involves more than the intellect, indeed it is a question that leads one to consider the nature of the soul as such. There is a sense, Aristotle tells us, in which pleasure is the highest good because human beings by nature pursue what is pleasurable (1153b25-30). This follows from the fact that the pleasures generally lead one to act for the sake of one's own well-being. However, not all people consider the same objects to be equally beneficial or pleasurable, and thus they pursue a variety goods. Yet Aristotle insists that they ultimately desire a single good: happiness. It is in this context that Aristotle states that what people pursue "is not the pleasure they think or say they do, but the one which is the same for all, for all...have by nature something divine in them" (1153b33-35). The divine is that which all people have in common that imparts the propensity to pursue the good.

To some extent, this places the emphasis on the rational intuition, for it is the intuition that focuses the desires in the formation of intention. In a general way the rational intuition perceives the good for a particular agent. Yet the general inclination to benefit oneself can be directed in particular situations to ends which are ultimately not conducive to happiness, and may in fact be harmful. That the agent may be mistaken and intentions can be corrupted implies that the divine element in human nature can be usurped or appropriated by base desires (1153b34-36). It is for this reason that Aristotle places such emphasis on the importance of temperance. Ethical virtue cultivates a disposition wherein the desires focus automatically upon what is truly good, and intuition is thereby able to perceive what is truly good for the agent in particular circumstances (1142b18-20,1144a20-24). Thus, the divine element which compels human beings to pursue the good is insufficient on its own to direct all human beings to that good. It must be given a definite form through the virtues. A person's soul is disposed to pursue one kind of pleasure over another, and these dispositions vary among people. It is through the experience of these pleasures that an agent chooses to pursue one kind of activity over another. The education to virtue insures that this pursuit is appropriate in the context of the political community. Thus, the one who desires bodily pleasures is educated to pursue his desires in the right manner while the one who loves honor has a propensity to pursue it in an agreeable manner. Each person loves a certain activity or set of activities most of all, and is disposed to choose them just as the one who loves geometrical thinking enjoys geometry over other activities (1175a30).

For the contemplative, then, to love contemplation is to desire above all the pleasures which perfect that activity, and it is in this that there is something divine about his nature (1176a1-3,1179a23-29. The nature of the contemplative is divine insofar as he takes the most pleasure in contemplation, and therefore chooses the activity which most closely resembles that attributed to the gods. Thus, as Aristotle writes, he "chooses his life not insofar as he is a man, but insofar as he has something divine in him" (1177b27). The contemplative has a quality in his soul which can be described as a divine spark which leads him to desire the most noble and honorable goods and thus take the greatest pleasure in the highest development of his intellectual capacities.

While this illuminates the nature of the second kind of magnanimous person's love of wisdom, and shows us in what sense the desires of the contemplative are distinct from those of the lower kind of magnanimity, it does not tell us in what sense the intellect (*nous*) is divine. The answer to this question is implied in the nature of the objects which the intellect comprehends during the activity of contemplation. The objects of contemplation are necessary and eternal, and they are the most fundamental which can be perceived by the scientific part of the rational soul. Thus, they are the most complete objects conceivable by human beings, and nothing can be added or taken away from them. It follows that they are also the most noble or beautiful objects which can be conceived. They are the objects whose beauty presumably attracts the attention of the gods, and therefore they are characterized as divine objects. Their perfection becomes the perfection of the intellect itself as it perceives them, because the first principles are the highest and most complete objects it can possibly perceive. This is the greatest end toward which the intellect can strive and the capacity to perceive the divine objects represents its highest level of maturity and growth. The perfection inherent in the most noble and architectonic of the first principles perfects that part of the soul with which they are comprehended (cf.1174b23-26,De *Anima*,431a5-13,b11-17). This also gives the greatest and purest pleasure to the contemplative because they are divorced from the passions and the entire realm of becoming (1177a25-28, 1178a23). While focused upon them, the intellect engages in a divine activity, and the pleasures which perfect the activity are likewise divine. Therefore, the intellect is divine insofar as it is able to and in fact does focus on the divine objects, and while he is engaged in this activity the contemplative's is a divine life. The activity of his intellect and the pleasures which he experiences are as superior to those of the composite part of the soul which perceives the principles in the realm of becoming as the divine is to the mundane (1177b27-30). While he engages in contemplation his happiness is complete, and he engages in an activity akin to that attributed to the gods (1178b29-33).

There are two senses, then, in which the lover of wisdom may be divine. The first sense, which was discussed earlier, is seen in the desire to possess knowledge of the most honorable truths to the exclusion of other desires. This is thought of as divine insofar as many people believe the gods do not possess base desires and therefore have a natural desire for the most noble objects. Human beings who have a natural desire for the most honorable truths over other objects are thought to resemble the gods in this respect. Above all other activities they desire to engage in the pursuit of wisdom. Yet the desire to perceive the most divine objects does not imply the capacity to actually perceive them. The contemplative who has completed or perfected his intellect by grasping the most complete and perfect objects displays a capacity which exceeds by far those who grasp only scientific knowledge. He has displayed magnanimity in the highest sense, that is the capacity to successfully understand the first principles and what follows from them. This is the second sense in which the lover of wisdom may be divine. This does not imply that the majority of citizens who refer to the first kind of magnanimous person as divine will regard the second kind in the same way. However, those who participate in the community of virtuous people will perceive the greatness of his capacity. The first kind of magnanimous one will perceive it through dialogue about political matters while those who have the desire to know the truth but lack the capacity to grasp it with equal clarity and fullness will honor him in a manner not dissimilar to the way many honor the gods. They will pattern their lives after the higher kind of magnanimity. These people are divine in the first sense, and thus will be suitable to engage the higher magnanimous one in dialogue and provide for the human need of companionship.

The implications of this divine aspect in the nature of those who love wisdom are of considerable importance. The intellect is divine in that it is capable of focusing on the most divine objects; but that the desire to focus on those objects appears to arise from the presence of a "divine spark" is crucial. The intellectual capacity for scientific knowledge, and even the ability to perceive in abstract the first principles is not enough to account for the love of wisdom seen in those who lead the philosophic life. The philosopher naturally takes the greatest pleasure in his activity, and this love arises from something divine and inexplicable. It is not clear, then, if the best part of the soul is really the intellect; in the case of the contemplative it could be the divine spark which leads one to desire knowledge of first principles. With respect to the best part of the soul, Aristotle states that:

> whether this be the intellect or something else which is thought to rule and guide us by its nature and have comprehension of noble and divine objects, being itself divine or the most divine part in us, its activity according to its proper virtue would be perfect happiness.
>
> 1177b11-16

Perfect happiness is found in the activity of the best part of the soul, but whether this is the intellect or the "divine touch" in the soul is left unclear. Ultimately, then, we do not fully understand the nature of the highest kind of magnanimity. This implies in turn that we do not fully understand the nature of the highest kind of virtue. The tension between the divine and human manifest in the contemplative has rendered the initial definition of wisdom as intuition and scientific knowledge questionable. Is this sufficient for wisdom, or must the nature of the contemplative be something divine, just as the nature of the magnanimous person must be truly great?

This question has considerable importance for the reader because it forces a reexamination of Aristotle's first accounts of happiness and ethical virtue. Ethical virtue refines, shapes and gives definite form to the soul's capacities and this leads to happiness. But is happiness also god-sent in some way, or is it the case that it has only the appearance of a divine good (1099b9-1100a9)? Questioning the nature of the highest virtue and the higher form of magnanimity implies that we do not fully understand the nature of the Good. The Good for human beings is an activity in accordance with the highest virtue, but it is also a divine activity which cannot be fully comprehended. The tension between the high and the low, reflected in the tension between the divine and the human, remains unresolved. A measure of reconciliation is achieved in the contemplative who engages in political philosophy, because he contemplates divine things and then demonstrates as far as possible how they bear upon human activities. His activities have an impact on the city in that he benefits others by his dialogue, and the best of the citizens are made even better by learning about the first principles.

Yet we are still left with the fact that the first kind of magnanimous person does not choose the divine life; instead he chooses the human and public life. There remains a tension between the divine and the human which is not resolved in political philosophy, and this tension is seen in the lives of both the higher and lower magnanimity. Both kinds of magnanimity remain complete in themselves and the experience of happiness is complete for each. Moreover, Aristotle implies that both kinds of life, the public life of the lower kind of magnanimity and the private life of the contemplative, are necessary and good in the context of political society (1180a33-b26). The tension between the high and the low not only remains unresolved, but the reader is left with a choice concerning the best life. This lack of resolution between the high and the low is not a failure on Aristotle's part. *N.E.* begins with the statement that it is an inquiry concerning the greatest Good for human beings and that it will teach people how to acquire this Good (1094b11, 1103b27-29). In leaving the tension between the high and the low unresolved and the question of the best life open, Aristotle has acted with the greatest consistency. He has made *N.E.* itself an example of its own teaching. The work forces the suitable reader back onto the text to engage in philosophic activity. It serves the naturally philosophical reader as a means of bringing about contemplative activity which is the highest Good. In keeping with the implications of the teaching concerning magnanimity, Aristotle has spoken of the most divine things in the form of political philosophy, has demonstrated his knowledge, and gently urged the highest activity upon those who wish to become virtuous.

Thus, *N.E.* presents a unified teaching beginning with Aristotle's general treatment of happiness and culminating in the discussion of contemplation. This teaching, however, is not like a landscape painting to be perceived from a distance, but is characterized by a singular ascent, of which magnanimity is an integral part, and which culminates in a discussion urging upon the reader the activity it concludes is the highest and requires the greatest capacities. Aristotle has written about the life of the philosopher as the good life, and in doing so he has presented a pattern for philosophic activity to all who aspire to perceive the highest objects and live a good life. This is one reason why he states that "perhaps writing or speaking would be nobler than making speeches in courts or assemblies" (1181a4,5). Yet Aristotle has not written solely for the sake of teaching the highest virtue to people outside his circle of personal contact, nor is it for the sake of acquiring great honors. He is writing in order to render the greatest honor and benefit to others like himself, and most importantly to those with whom he has studied philosophy. This too is consistent with the teaching on magnanimity, and is fitting for one "concerned with honors and dishonors as he should be", and who wishes to manifest the most noble form of gratitude (1123b21,22, 1124b10-15).

In friendship, honor is often given to those who are superior to such an extent that one cannot fully repay the goods they have rendered. Thus, "a return according to merit does not even exist in all friendships, as in the case of honors paid to gods or parents" (1163b16,18). Honor is the only acceptable return to parents, because in giving a child life and raising it, they have rendered to that child the greatest good. The same is true of the gods who are thought to care for humankind (1179a23-25). For the higher kind of magnanimous person:

> [this] should be the return to a man under whom one has studied philosophy, for the worth of philosophy cannot be measured in money, and there is no equivalent value which can match it; but perhaps it is enough, as is done for gods and parents, to return what one can.
>
> 1164b3-5

The greatest and most honorable action the higher magnanimous person can render to another with whom he has discussed the most noble things is to contemplate first principles and share in the thoughts and conversations concerning the truth.[12] Writing and engaging in dialogue about the most noble things is good in itself, and for the highest kind of magnanimous person, is the greatest and most natural expression of friendship.

The highest form of magnanimous individual engages in the most divine activity, but he provides it with a human expression in the highest form of friendship and philosophic dialogue about politics and the good life. This activity reflects both the divine and the human. The philosopher contemplates the first principles, and then in dialogue or through writing, teaches others how to acquire virtue. The human and the divine are reconciled in this activity. Thus, the aim of the city and the highest good achievable by human action is understood in the light of the activity of the highest part of the soul: the pursuit of Wisdom.

END NOTES

1. This should not be confused with the modern scientific notion of observation and hypotheses. For Aristotle, scientific knowledge focuses on a natural order of which human beings are a part. Thus, he observes nature acting on its own, that is "acting naturally", to learn how that order performs its function and how human beings relate to it. The notion of conducting a controlled experiment in laboratory conditions was the farthest thing from Aristotle's mind. For example, accelerating particles and smashing them to bits is not how nature acts of its own accord, and therefore not a sound basis for the demonstration of principles of the order of which humanity is a part.

2. *Posterior Analytics*, 71b8-72a24,98a35-b16.

3. *Posterior Analytics*, 72b19-24.

4. This is not to argue that the prudent person is never accomplished in perceiving the unchanging principles with which science is concerned. The point here is that he makes certain assumptions because prudence by its very nature is more concerned with the practical than the universal truths which are the object of science (cf., 1141b15-23,1139b20-24).

5. If this is correct, it is clear why Aristotle writes that it is often thought that justice is another's good (1129b29 emphasis mine). It would appear on the surface

that this is true; however, as Aristotle's analysis shows, the reasons for being a just ruler may be very self centered.

Athens at the time of Pericles is a good example. The city voted to adopt his policies because they were the best and with them it was able to flourish. Pericles had a great desire to benefit Athens by his policies, but he was no doubt also aware that his own greatness was reflected in the fact that the city flourished by his policies. It is to be noted that when the city failed to follow the advice he had given it began to decline, and this fact is preserved by Thucydides as a testament of Pericles' greatness (Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War*, II, 65).

6. Thucydides The Peloponnesian War, II, 64,65.

7. It is a matter of no small importance that Aristotle cites Thales and Anaxagoras as examples of men perceived by many to be impractical but wise. Aristotle himself casts doubt upon this judgment. Thales is cited in *The Politics* as one who possesses an exemplary capacity for practical wisdom, and in fact, proved it in response to criticism for his poverty (which implies that he may have held the moderate disposition of the higher form of magnanimity) by making himself wealthy (1259a7-21). Aristotle notes specifically that it was his knowledge of astronomy, a seemingly impractical science, which helped him acquire his wealth. In addition, Thales is one of the Seven Sages who were noted for their political insight and Wisdom. Anaxagoras too is noteworthy, for he was the mentor of Pericles, the exemplar of magnanimity and practical wisdom to which Aristotle refers by name. See the Oxford Companion To Classical Literature, 2nd. ed., ed. M.C. Howatson (Oxford University Press, 1989) pp.34,559.

These examples are curious. If the magnanimous person does not recognizes that such people are prudent he is surely mistaken, and the magnanimous one would not make such a mistake. Pericles, for example, must have known through Anaxagoras that a wise man can be prudent. In fact, Pericles' outstanding prudence may have been learned in part from Anaxagoras. An important question then arises. For some reason, magnanimous people such as Pericles choose the life of public honors rather than philosophy. Does this imply that their love of honor is a defect in the soul? Or does it indicate that the philosopher has something divine in him which inhibits him, or even forbids him from pursuing a life of public honors? (1177a11-18,b27-30). This question will come to the fore latter in this chapter.

8. *Symposium*, 215e-216c.

9. There are of course other instances where such danger is not present and the magnanimous person is not directly involved in the execution of the actions. However, in his

care for the city he will do his best to be sure the city's policies are just. For example, when Athens voted unjustly to put the entire male population of Mytilene to death and sell the women and children into slavery, Diodotus, who is mentioned nowhere else by Thucydides in connection with the war, confronted Athens and argued successfully against the policy. In doing so he was not in danger, nor is it likely that his failure would have made life his intolerable. It is worthy of note, however, that Diodotus indicates that ironic speech is necessary for a man in his position, and that he made his arguments on grounds of "utility" rather than discuss openly his real concerns (Thucydides, III,42,43).

10. It should be noted, however, that there are limits to the extent one would wish his friend to become self-sufficient. To become completely self-sufficient would mean that one had no need for political society, or for friends in particular. Thus to wish complete self-sufficiency for one's friend is to wish for the end of the friendship, a desire which is far from moderate or prudent.

Aristotle states that to be entirely self-sufficient is to be like God. It is necessary to distinguish the use of the term "God" from the gods as they are popularly conceived. God is understood as a first principle which is higher than the deities which ordinary people honor (*Metaphysics*,983a8,9). One may appreciate the difference in the following manner. At 1178b9-22 Aristotle describes the life of the gods. He states that they are above justice, courage, or any of the ethical virtues. He finishes his description by questioning whether contemplation is the only activity left for them. The answer would appear to be that this is not the case. Aristotle has not mentioned friendship or dialogue, activities which may very well be suited to the gods and bear a close relationship with intellectual virtue insofar as dialogue is an activity which naturally complements contemplation. However, such activities could not be attributed to God, the cause of that which is contemplated.

According to Aristotle one would wish the such self-sufficiency of God only for oneself because one always reserves the greatest good for oneself (1159a6-13).

11. It is noteworthy that Socrates provoked the Athenians because such provocation constitutes a problem for Aristotle. Socrates' way of life is the life of the higher kind of magnanimous man, a life committed to the discovery of the truth about the most honorable things. Yet in living this kind of life, Socrates ran afoul of the Athenian people, an end which, according to Aristotle's account, is not required and indeed avoidable.

It is not mere conjecture which takes Socrates to be representative of the second kind of magnanimity. Aristotle provides for the possibility of two forms of magnanimity in

Posterior Analytics, 97b16-25, and Socrates is mentioned as an example of one of the two forms. One form, typified by Alcibiades, Achilles, and Ajax, is said to brook no dishonor, while Socrates and Lysander are said to be indifferent to good or bad fortune. The reference to Lysander is problematic because he appears to be provoked by insult or dishonor just as the others mentioned in connection with the first form (*Politics*,1306b34). However, Socrates seems to be less inclined to become angry over insults (he became a public spectacle in *Clouds*), and he appears indifferent to good or bad fortune (witness his poverty). Aristotle therefore may take him to represent another kind of magnanimity.

A second reference to Socrates is more revealing. In his treatise *On Sophistical Refutations*, Aristotle states that the sophists have made it necessary that one not only be able to conduct an examination dialectically and with knowledge, but at the same time defend the argument with common sense views that have a wide appeal (183b1-6). The sophists specialized in arguments that made them appear wise without their actually being wise. The task of one who possesses knowledge, however, is to avoid fallacies while at the same time exposing the fallacies of others, and this is accomplished by rendering answers from them about that which they claim to know (165a19-27). It is for this reason, Aristotle states, that Socrates asked questions but did not answer them (183b7). The appeal of Socrates was to common sense, and his way of asking questions revealed the fallacies of others insofar as their positions violated common sense. Aristotle seems to admire and even support Socrates' way of asking questions, because it could be used to defeat the sophists. He is an admirer of Socrates' irony.

Yet it was Socrates' irony that provoked the Athenians. Socrates' manner of asking questions was well known in Athens (particularly among the sophists), and his claim to know nothing was especially provoking, because his ability to reveal the fallacies of an argument implied that he did know (*Apology*,17b,c;23a;*Republic*,337a). However, as seen in the *Republic*, Socrates' irony was instrumental in subduing Thrasymachus and initiating the conversation which provided Adeimantus and Glaucon with a splendid education. Through his irony Socrates was able to prove the superiority of his way of asking questions, and perform the task which the sophists claim for themselves: that of educating citizens to engage in politics. Socrates' irony is beneficial for the city because it silences the sophists.

Aristotle reveals a concern about the sophists at the conclusion of *N.E.* which echoes the concern of Socrates in the *Republic*. Aristotle criticizes the sophists for claiming that they can teach people to engage in politics and become law-givers. That the sophists do not understand politics is made clear by the fact that they do not participate in political life, and in fact reduce it to mere rhetoric (1181a1-15). Like Socrates, Aristotle wishes to reveal the fallacies of the sophistic arguments.

The example of Socrates, then, is very important in Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity because, like Socrates, the higher kind of magnanimous person has the knowledge and the ability to silence the sophists, and his love of truth will motivate him to do so. However, Aristotle has changed the nature of the argument between the sophists and the philosophers. From the beginning he has spoken of politics as a science which is based upon principles that can be grasped by most people (110214-26,1180b20-23,32). Thus, he appeals to the generally held views which reveal the fallacies of sophistic arguments. However, they are also part of an orderly account of the whole of nature, and as such they are general (982a20-b10,1141a19-22). The demand for too much precision in discussing them does not accord with their nature (982a8-10,1094b15-23,1104a1-10). Thus, the contemplative possesses the knowledge to silence the sophists, but where Socrates was asking what a particular object is, for example courage, Aristotle appeals to general principles which allow a commonly accepted definition and a variety of species. He is therefore able to appeal to common sense and reveal the fallacies of sophistic arguments without employing the kind of irony which so angered Athens.

This does not mean that Aristotle found cause to criticize Socrates for his irony. Socrates was charged with corrupting the youth and not believing in the city's gods. The higher form of magnanimous one may be open to these same charges. The conflict between the higher kind of magnanimity and the city still exists, and irony remains as important for Aristotle as is did for Socrates. Irony is considered a vice by most people, and indeed, Aristotle treats it as a form of untruthfulness. However, Aristotle also holds that the understatement of virtues and *actions* "appears to be more cultivated in character" when it is not for the sake of gain but is done to spare the feelings of others less virtuous, or to avoid the appearance of pomposity and an excessive desire to acquire a reputation (1127b8,9,23-35). It is in this context that he uses Socrates as an example. When it is the understatement of great acts or virtues which the magnanimous person may exhibit, irony may not even be a vice. Aristotle limits his criticism to those "petty dissemblers" who understate trivial and obvious acts and virtues as if they were great. Aristotle's treatment of vice contains no criticism of Socrates. In fact, the example of Socrates is constantly in the background of Aristotle's treatise. Socrates' life and death is not so much a problem for Aristotle as an example to be honored.

12. It is the desire of the magnanimous one to always render greater benefits to others than those others have

rendered to him. It would seem to be the case, then, that to honor the one with whom he has studied philosophy, and to reciprocate with a greater good, that the magnanimous one would have to present an account of first principles which added to his teacher's understanding or which in fact brought his teacher closer to the truth in some respect.

However, wisdom is intuition and scientific knowledge of the most noble objects, and scientific knowledge is belief of universal and necessary things. It is therefore possible that one's belief about the first principles may be mistaken. Thus, the student cannot be entirely certain of his own account of the first principles. His surest knowledge would seem to be his ignorance of the whole.

Philosophy is by no means rendered futile by this because it is the exercise of the highest faculties for the highest ends. Moreover, in dialogue with the person with whom one has studied philosophy, one is not only acting in accordance with the highest kind of friendship, but honor is being rendered. One is displaying the same care for the truth that he learned from his teacher, and if philosophy is truly the love of wisdom, no greater honor can be rendered to a teacher.

In this light it is worthy to consider the friendship of Aristotle and Plato, and the relationship these two philosophers had to Socrates, who never wrote a word.

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